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~~12~~

*12-11-11*

2541. 1237.







There is much to be done  
in the way of education  
and it is more than I shall  
now attempt. It will be  
no wonder enough that  
the present state of the  
country is so much  
depressed. It is a  
sad state of affairs.

Yours truly,  
Wm. Lloyd Garrison

Ms. A. 9. 2. 11

10.8.427

CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

# ESSAYS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED A FEW

# P O E M S.

By ALEXANDER H. EVERETT.



BOSTON:

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## EVERETT'S MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS.

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### MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

[Boston Miscellany, Feb. 1842.]

It is remarkable that many of the best books of all sorts have been written by persons, who at the time of writing them, had no intention of becoming authors. Indeed, with a slight inclination to systematize and exaggerate, one might be almost tempted to maintain the position, — however paradoxical it may at first blush appear, — that no good book can be written in any other way; that the only literature of any value is that which grows indirectly out of the real action of society, intended directly to effect some other purpose; and that when a man sits down doggedly in his study, and says to himself, 'I mean to write a good book,' it is certain, from the necessity of the case, that the result will be a bad one.

To illustrate this by a few examples: Shakspeare, the Greek Dramatists, Lope and Calderon, Corneille, Racine, and Molière, — in short, all the dramatic poets of much celebrity, prepared their works for actual representation, at times when the drama was the favorite amusement. Their plays, when collected, make excellent books. At a later period, when the drama had in a great measure gone out of fashion, Lord Byron, a man not inferior, perhaps, in

poetical genius to any of the persons just mentioned, undertakes, without any view to the stage, to write a book of the same kind. What is the result? Something which, as Ninon de l'Enclos said of the young Marquis de Sévigné, has very much the character of *fricasseed snow*. Homer, again, or the Homerites, a troop of wandering minstrels, composed, probably without putting them to paper, certain songs and ballads, which they sung at the tables of the warriors and princes of their time. Some centuries afterwards, Pisistratus made them up into a book, which became the bible of Greece. Voltaire, whose genius was perhaps equal to that of any of the Homerites, attempted in cold blood, to make just such a book; and here, again, the product, called the *Henriade*, is no book, but another lump of *fricasseed snow*. What are all your pretended histories? Fables, jest books, satires, apologies, any thing but what they profess to be. Bring together the correspondence of a distinguished public character, a Washington, a Wellington, and then, for the first time, you have a real history. Even in so small a matter as a common letter to a friend, if you write one for the sake of writing it, in order to produce a good letter as such, you will probably fail. Who ever read one of Pliny's precious specimens of affectation and formality, without wishing that he had perished in the same eruption of Vesuvius that destroyed his uncle? On the contrary, let one who has any thing to say to another at a distance, in the way of either business or friendship, commit his thoughts to paper merely for the purpose of communicating them, and he will not only effect his immediate object, but, however humble may be his literary pretensions, will commonly write something that may be read with pleasure by an indifferent third person. In short, experience seems to show that every book, prepared with a view to mere book-making, is



necessarily a sort of counterfeit, bearing the same relation to a real book, which the juggling of the Egyptian magicians did to the miracles of Moses.

But not to push these ideas to extravagance, it may be sufficient for the present purpose to say that Madame de Sévigné, without intending to become an author, has, in fact, produced one of the most agreeable and really valuable books that have ever been written. Her letters are not sermons, or essays in disguise, but were composed, without any view to publication, for the purpose of talking on paper to a beloved daughter, with whom the writer had in a manner identified her existence. They are, therefore, a genuine thing of their kind, and besides answering the purpose for which they were originally written, may be expected, as was just now remarked, to possess an accidental value for the public, which will be greater or less according to the character of the writer. In the present case, this accidental value is very high, in consequence of the extraordinary merit and talent of Madame de Sévigné, and the elevated sphere in which she moved. It has been justly observed by Madame de Staël, that the private life of almost every individual, properly treated, would furnish materials for an interesting romance. It is easy to imagine, therefore, that a collection of letters, covering a period of half a century in the domestic history of one of the most distinguished and accomplished families in France,—written throughout in a manner which is admitted by all to be the perfection of the epistolary style,—must have the charm of a first-rate novel. But, in addition to this, they have another value, of a perfectly distinct, if not much higher kind, as a picture by a master-hand, of one of the most brilliant periods in the history of civilization. Madame de Sévigné was placed by birth and marriage in the highest circles of the Court of Louis XIV., and

maintained a constant personal intercourse, more or less intimate, with all the prominent political men, from the King downwards. Her superior intellect and literary tastes and habits also gave her an interest in the current literature. The popular authors and their books are among her regular topics. These new books, of which she notices the publication and first effect, are no other than the acknowledged masters-pieces of modern art; their authors are Corneille, Racine, Molière and La Fontaine, De Retz and La Rochefoucault, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Fléchier and Massillon.

Again; her fascinating manners and splendid conversational powers, — for she seems to have excelled as much in conversation as in writing, — rendered her a universal favorite, and the life of every circle in which she appeared. She is constantly surrounded, — abroad and at home, in town or in the country, — by the most interesting portion of the refined and cultivated classes. Thus, the varied and brilliant panorama, exhibited at the Court of Versailles during the reign of Louis XIV., is reflected in her letters with a perfect truth to nature, and a magical grace, vivacity and elegance of style. Finally, these remarkable letters derive their last and highest charm from the excellent moral tone that pervades the whole collection. Living in a society where licentiousness had ceased to be regarded as criminal, and was countenanced by the almost universal practice of the Court, Madame de Sévigné, though continually wrought upon by influences of the most seductive kind, maintained the purity of her personal character unsullied by blemish or suspicion. At a time when there was, generally speaking, no medium, in the circles in which she moved, between the avowed voluptuary and the ascetic, she avoided both extremes; and following with firmness, or rather without any apparent effort, the impulse of a naturally sound judgment and

affectionate heart, united a sincere interest in religion and a scrupulously correct course of practical conduct with a cheerful and genuine enjoyment of life. She habitually read, thought and conversed on religious subjects, and often makes them the topic of her letters. She hangs with rapture upon the lips of the great pulpit orators, Bossuet, Fléchier, and particularly Bourdaloue, who seems to be her especial favorite. She has even at times a slight leaning towards a severe system of morals, from her strong attachment to *Messieurs de Port-Royal*, whose works she regularly devours as they come out; and she now and then pleasantly laments that she cannot be a *dévoté*, that is, that she cannot make up her mind to retire into a convent and give herself up to religious exercises, meditation and solitude. In these regrets, however, as may well be supposed, she is not more than half in earnest. Her good sense and cheerful temper prevent her from yielding to these momentary impulses, sustain her steadily in a uniform line of conduct through a life of threescore and ten years, diversified by many painful scenes, and shed a sunny glow over her whole correspondence. Her pictures of life have none of the false coloring, sometimes called *romantic*, and yet we know no book that leaves upon the mind a more agreeable impression of the character of the author and of human nature in general. We see that here are real men and women, fashioned, in all respects, as we are, and provided with an ample allowance of faults and weaknesses, but of whom the better portion sincerely love one another, and cheerfully make sacrifices for each other's welfare: this is the true, and, for that reason, the most improving and edifying as well as the most attractive view of human life.

Carlyle, in his review of Boswell's Johnson, represents that work as the best that was published in England during

the last century. Madame de Sévigné is a sort of French Boswell ; and without going, in regard to her, to the full length of Carlyle's rather extravagant eulogy upon the *Johnsoniad*, as he calls it, we can say with truth that we hardly know any French literary work of the last century for which we would exchange her letters. In reality, however, the letters, though published during the last century, belong to the preceding one by character, as well as date ; and display the vigor of thought, and the pure taste in style, which characterized the period of Louis XIV., and of which we find so few traces even in the best French productions of subsequent times. It is amusing to remark the complete contrast, in other respects, between two works of which the general scope and object coincide so nearly as those of Boswell and Madame de Sévigné. The stolid, blundering, drunken self-sufficiency of poor Bozzy, united ridiculously enough with a most grovelling subserviency to the literary leviathan whom he had made his idol, sets off in high relief the airy though finished elegance of the *bellissima Madre*, and the graceful ease with which she handles every subject and character that comes in her way. The narrative form adopted by Boswell, and the entire sacrifice of all the other characters to the redoubtable Doctor, increase the unity and with it the interest of the work ; but, for the same reason, they make it, what it indeed professes to be, a biographical rather than a historical one. In the letters of Madame de Sévigné, the characters all appear in their just proportions ; the vast canvass is not the portrait of an individual, but the panorama of an age.

These letters are so perfect in their kind that the good natured generation of critics have been rather at a loss to know how to find fault with them. The only objection that has ever been made to the style, is, that the writer

uses, perhaps half a dozen times in her twelve volumes, two or three words, which, though considered polite in her time, are now obsolete. As regards the substance, there is no unfavorable judgment of much authority, excepting that of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who pronounces the letters to be mere *tittle-tattle*, and the author, something between a fine lady and an *old nurse*. When will rival wits and belles learn to do each other justice? Without disparagement to her Ladyship's taste and judgment, we incline to the opinion that the *tittle-tattle* of circles in which Condé and Corneille conversed with Louis XIV., Turenne, Bossuet, Pascal, Fenelon and Sévigné, will be thought, hereafter, at least as interesting as descriptions of Turkish manners and scenery, agreeable as these, from the elegant pen of Lady Mary, undoubtedly are.

Madame de Sévigné belonged to the noble family of Rabutin-Chantal, and was born in 1626. Her grandmother, the Baroness of Chantal, was a person of extraordinary piety. She instituted the order of *Sisters of the Visitation*, of which she established eighty-four convents in France. In the year 1767, she was canonized by Pope Clement XIV., as one of the saints of the Catholic church. Her son, and Madame de Sévigné's father, Baron Chantal, though essentially, as it appears, a good-natured person, seems to have practiced a singular frankness in his epistolary style, at least if we may judge from a specimen which is preserved in the letters of his daughter. On the elevation of Mr. de Schomberg to the dignity of Marshal of France, Chantal addressed him the following laconic letter:

*'Monseigneur,*

*Qualité : Barbe noire : familiarité.*

CHAUTAL.'

In this rather enigmatical despatch, the Baron is

understood to have intended to reproach his correspondent with being indebted for his promotion to his high birth, his beard, which was black like that of Louis XIII., and his personal acquaintance with the King. Baron Chautal commanded the French forces, which were stationed at the Isle of Rhé to repulse the attack of the English under the Duke of Buckingham, in 1627. On this occasion he sustained himself heroically for six hours in succession, had three horses killed under him, and received twenty-seven wounds,—the last, as is said, from the hand of Oliver Cromwell, which proved fatal. His widow died in 1632, leaving their only daughter, afterward Madame de Sévigné, an orphan six years old. She owed her education chiefly to her uncle, the Abbé de Livry, of the Coulanges family, who took a paternal care of her through life, and left her his property. He lived to an advanced age, and figures constantly in the letters under the title of *le bien bon*.

Mademoiselle de Chautal was presented at the Court of Louis XIII., at the age of about seventeen. At this time she is described as having been remarkably handsome. She was of middling stature, with a good person, a profusion of light colored hair, an uncommonly fresh and brilliant complexion, indicating luxuriant health, a musical voice, a lively and agreeable manner, and a more than ordinary skill in the elegant accomplishments that belong to a finished education. Her cousin, the notorious Count de Bussy-Rabutin, in a sort of satirical portrait of her, written in a fit of ill-humor, amused himself at the expense of her square nose and parti-colored eye-lashes, to which she occasionally alludes herself in her letters. Bussy, however, in his better moods, does justice to her appearance, as well as character, and repeatedly pronounces her, in his letters, the handsomest woman in France. Her beauty, which seems to have depended on

good health and a happy temperament, rather than mere regularity of features, improved with age, and she retained to a very late period of life the titles of *bellissima Madre*, and the Mother Beauty, (*mère beauté*,) which were conferred upon her by her cousin Coulanges, and confirmed by the general voice of the society in which she lived. The year following her appearance at Court she married the Marquis de Sévigné, who was killed in a duel six years later, leaving her a wealthy and attractive widow of about four-and-twenty, at a Court where, as has been already remarked, licentiousness was nearly universal, and where the women of fashion passed, almost without exception, through the two periods of gallantry in early life, and ascetic devotion after the age of pleasure was over. It is no slight merit in Madame de Sévigné, considering the circumstances, that she steered clear of both these opposite excesses, and stood by general acknowledgment above suspicion. This is fairly admitted even by her enemies, or rather enemy, for her cousin Bussy was the only person who ever openly found fault with her. In order to have some apology for refusing her the credit she deserves, he ascribes her correct conduct to coldness of temperament, as if every line of her correspondence did not prove that her heart was overflowing with kindness, and that she was habitually under the influence of impulse, quite as much as of calculation. No better proof of this will be wanted, at least by the ultra-prudent generation of New England parents, than that she sacrificed a great part of her large fortune in establishing her son and daughter, and found herself, in her later years, reduced to comparatively quite narrow circumstances. It was her felicity, or rather her merit, that her affections, strong as they were, flowed in healthy and natural channels, instead of wasting themselves on forbidden objects. The evident ill-humor with

which Lady Mary Wortley Montague speaks of her and her writings, was probably owing, in part, to a consciousness of the great superiority in this respect of the character of Madame de Sévigné to her own.

Madame de Sévigné not only kept herself aloof from the almost universal licentiousness of her time, but steadily refused all offers of marriage, and devoted herself with exemplary assiduity to the education of her two children, a son and daughter. The latter is the person to whom the greater part of the letters are addressed. The same authorities which represent the mother as the handsomest woman in France, describe the daughter as the handsomest young lady, (*la plus jolie fille.*) She was married at eighteen to the Count de Grignan, a nobleman of high consideration and apparently excellent character, who was called on soon after to act as governor of Provence. His lady naturally accompanied him, and the separation that took place in consequence between the mother and daughter, was the immediate cause of the correspondence, which has given them both, and particularly the former, so extensive a celebrity. After a few detached letters of an earlier date, the principal series commences with the departure of Madame de Grignan for Provence, and is kept up at very short intervals, — excepting when the parties were occasionally together, sometimes for years in succession, — through the whole life of Madame de Sévigné; who, at the age of seventy, died at her daughter's residence, of small pox, brought on by excessive care and fatigue in attending upon this beloved child through a severe and protracted illness of several months: — thus, finally sacrificing her life to the strong maternal love to which she had already sacrificed her fortune, and which had been the absorbing passion and principal source of happiness of all her riper years. This deeply affecting catastrophe crowns with a sort of



poetical consistency, the beautiful and touching romance of real life, which it brings to a close.

The letters, considered merely as a sketch of the private adventures of the parties, revolve round the circle of incidents, which made up, at that time, the history of every family of the same class. The son's achievements in the wars,—the marriage of the daughter,—her health and the birth of her children,—her husband's affairs, which became embarrassed from the necessity of keeping up an immense household as governor of Provence, without any adequate allowance from the King to cover the expense;—the establishment of her daughter's children,—together with the adventures of other more remote branches of the family, compose the outline of the plot, which is of course simple enough. The characters of the corresponding parties, and their immediate connections, are also, with the exception of Madame de Sévigné herself, rather common place. The son, who was placed at great expense to his mother in the army, seems to have made little or no figure, and retired early to a life of inactivity. The daughter, Madame de Grignan, in the few of her letters which are preserved, says nothing to justify the unbounded admiration with which she is constantly spoken of by her mother and the whole family circle. Count de Bussy is an original, but of an unpleasant kind; and is never entertaining, excepting when he makes himself ridiculous, which happens rather often. The Coulanges are mere votaries of fashion, and so of the rest. But the test of genius, as need hardly be said, is, *proprie communia dicere*,—to produce great effects with common materials,—to tell the story of life, as it really passes, in a lively, original, and entertaining way. The brilliant imagination and magical pen of Madame de Sévigné threw an air of novelty over all these every-day characters and incidents, and we follow the development

of their fortunes with an interest that never flags through the whole twelve volumes.

At the present day, however, these letters, though highly agreeable as a picture of domestic life in France at the period when they were written, are, from the extraordinary importance of that period, still more valuable, as a record of contemporary events and characters. It may be amusing to the reader to cast a glance, — of course exceedingly rapid and cursory, — over some of the scenes that are successively brought before the eye in traversing this long and well-stored gallery.

The collection opens with two or three letters to Ménage, a sort of pedant, who then enjoyed the reputation of a wit. He had some share in the education of Madame de Sévigné, and seems to have availed himself of the occasion to fall in love with her. He is quietly taught to keep his distance, and, taking the hint, soon retires into silence, and we hear no more of him.

The next personage that occupies the stage is the eccentric cousin, Bussy-Rabutin, now in the full flow of youthful impertinence and self-sufficiency, sowing his wild oats with a profuse hand in all quarters. The great Turenne, who combined with transcendent military talents, an almost childish simplicity of character, could, nevertheless, at times say a good thing, and one day informed the King that Bussy was the best officer in the army — *at a song*. The King pretty soon had occasion to know by experience the extent of Bussy's talent in this way, the latter having in one of his ballads introduced the following highly complimentary epigram upon Louis XIV. and Madame de la Valliere, — who, it appears, had a rather wide mouth :

' Que Deodatus \* est heureux  
De baiser ce bec amoureux  
Que d'une oreille à l'autre va  
Halleluia !'

\* Deodatus, (Dieu-donné,) was one of the names of Louis XIV.

'What a fortunate man is our gracious sovereign in being permitted to salute a mouth that stretches so invitingly from ear to ear!' The epigram, which is, after all none of the best, cost poor Bussy pretty dear. Louis, though not very intolerant in similar cases, thought this a little *too bad*, or was, perhaps, set on by the lady, who was probably not much gratified by seeing the longitude of her mouth so nicely calculated, and sent Bussy to the Bastile. After doing penance there for a few months, he was permitted to retire to his estates, where he remained an exile from the Court for the rest of his life. He appears, from time to time, through the whole course of the letters, affecting much philosophy and resignation, but always engaged in some new effort to recover the King's favor. It is not very easy, however, for a singed moth to get back his wings. All these efforts successively failed, and Bussy died at an advanced age, as he had lived, in exile. Madame de Sévigné never entirely forgave him for his wanton and malignant attack upon her in the portrait. She receives his apologies, though conceived in the most fulsome strain of flattery and devotion, for a time with bitterness; and though at length apparently softened, maintains a constrained and formal tone in her correspondence with him to the last.

The personage next in order is one of higher political importance, the celebrated Superintendent Fouquet, the Wolsey of France. His history is well known. The immense fortune, which he had amassed in the exercise of his office, and the ostentatious display which he made of it, were the real causes of his ruin. He had assumed for his arms a squirrel, pursued by a snake, which was the device of Colbert, with the motto, *Quò non ascendam?* This was emblazoned in every form upon the walls and furniture of his splendid residence at Vauxle-Vicomte. The picture was prophetic of his fortune. The wily

enemy was too successful in the pursuit of his indiscreet prey. Colbert, a statesman much superior in conduct to Fouquet, and the Secretary of State, Le Tellier, afterward Marquis de Louvois, roused the jealousy of the King by representations of the inordinate wealth of the Superintendent. Shortly after an entertainment which he had given to the King and Court at Vaux, and which had exceeded in magnificence any thing of the kind ever known in France, he was arrested, and his papers were seized. Among these was unfortunately found the draft of some plot against Cardinal Mazarin, formed many years before during the ministry of Louis XIV., when the different members of the royal family were at war with each other, and when it was rather difficult for any one to say what the government was, or who was in possession of it. This project, which had never been acted on, had lain forgotten among the papers of Fouquet, and was now made the pretext of his ruin. After having been kept in confinement three years, he was tried for his life by a special commission, as the author of the paper alluded to. The Court made the strongest efforts to procure a sentence of death, but could only obtain one of perpetual banishment, which the King commuted into the severer one of imprisonment for life. The fate of Fouquet, who seems to have been a vain, ambitious, and corrupt man, now excites little sympathy; but the means employed to bring it about were not very creditable to the character of Louis. The Superintendent had made himself a general favorite by his profuse liberality, and his patronage of the arts, in consequence of which, and of the manifest injustice of the proceedings against him, his case called forth at the time much commiseration among the better part of society. Turenne, in particular, took a strong interest in his favor. One day, when some one was commending in his

presence the moderation of Le Tellier, and blaming the violence of Colbert: 'Why, yes,' replied Turenne, 'Colbert is rather more eager to get him hung than Le Tellier, but Le Tellier is much more afraid that he will escape than Colbert.'

Madame de Sévigné had been on friendly terms with Fouquet, and had written him some letters during his prosperity. They were found among his papers, and without throwing any imputation upon her character, made known to the Court, for the first time, the graces of her epistolary style. She was present at the trial of Fouquet, and gives in several letters a minute and highly interesting account of the proceedings. Fouquet passed a number of years in close confinement in the fortress of Pignerol; was finally released on account of the bad state of his health, and died a few months after his liberation.

The death of Turenne furnishes Madame de Sévigné with a subject for several of her finest letters. This great commander was killed nearly in the same way with General Moreau. He was at the head of the French army in the Campaign of 1675; and was proceeding, one day after dinner, to examine from an eminence the position of the enemy, who were retreating before him. He had with him a large suite, including his nephew, the Count d'Elbeuf, Count Hamilton, and M. de St. Hilaire. As he approached the eminence, he said to M. d'Elbeuf, 'You are too near me, nephew. You will make me known to the enemy.' Immediately after, Count Hamilton said to him, 'Come this way, sir, they are firing on the point where you are.' To which Turenne replied, 'You are right. I should not like to be killed to-day, when matters are going on so well.' He had scarcely turned his horse when St. Hilaire came up to him, hat in hand, and begged him to take a look at a battery which he had just been constructing, a little in

the other direction. Turenne returned, and at the same moment a ball, which also carried away the arm of St. Hilaire, struck him in the body. His horse started at the shock, and conveyed the rider back to the place where he had left his nephew. The hero had not yet fallen, but was bowed down upon his horse's neck, and when the animal stopped, sunk into the arms of the attendants, convulsively opened his eyes and mouth two or three times, and then expired. The ball had carried away a portion of his heart.

Funeral orations were delivered in honor of Turenne by the great pulpit orators, Mascaron and Fléchier, upon both of which we have commentaries from Madame de Sévigné. The former seems to have attracted rather more of her attention than the latter; and this preference has been considered as a proof of bad taste, but was probably owing to the circumstance, that she did not hear the oration of Fléchier, having been at the time ill in the country. In general, as we said before, she speaks frequently of the pulpit orators, particularly Bourdaloue. The effect of his eloquence upon his audiences seems to have been very great. One day, while he was delivering a sermon, the Marshal de Grammont was so much struck with the truth of a particular passage, that he expressed his approbation aloud, on the spot, in the not very edifying ejaculation, *Mon Dieu, il a raison!* The princesses, who were present, burst into a loud fit of laughter, and it was sometime before order could be restored.

Madame de Sévigné does full justice on various occasions to Bossuet. The magnificent funeral oration which he delivered upon the great Condé, beginning with the well-known *Dieu seul est grand*, contains a parallel between Condé and Turenne, which did not at the time give entire satisfaction to the Court. As Condé was a prince of the blood royal, it was thought rather indecorous

that any mere nobleman, however elevated in rank, (and Turenne himself was a prince,) should be brought into competition with him. Count de Grammont, a nephew of the Marshal, said to the King after hearing Bossuet, that he had been listening to the funeral oration of M. de Turenne; and Madame de Sévigné herself remarks that M. de Meaux, in comparing *without necessity* these two great captains, gave credit to Condé for talent and good fortune, but allowed to Turenne the higher praise of prudence and good conduct. This brilliant aristocracy little thought, at the time, how soon a Corsican adventurer, with very doubtful pretensions to nobility of any kind, was to seat himself in triumph on the throne of St. Louis.

Louis XIV. figures frequently in the letters, and, to do him justice, makes a good figure wherever he appears. Like his contemporary and pensioner, Charles II., he possessed the *apropos* in discourse, and a remarkable happiness in repartee. Thus, when he was taking leave of the unfortunate James II., at his departure for Ireland on the expedition for the recovery of his crown, he said to him, 'I shall always be proud and happy to receive your Majesty in my kingdom, but the greatest compliment that I can pay you at parting is to wish that I may never see you again.' When the Marquis of Uxelles, who after a gallant defence had been compelled by want of powder and provisions to surrender the fortress of Mentz, returned to Paris, he was hissed, on his first appearance in the theatre. The King, by way of compensation, received him at Court with great favor, and said to him, 'Sir, you defended your post like a man of spirit, and surrendered like a man of sense.' One day at the King's Levée, the conversation turning upon the loss of a recent battle by the Marshal de Créquy, some one of the courtiers inquired of his Majesty, why the Marshal fought this battle?

'Your question,' said the King, in reply, 'reminds me of a similar one which was addressed to the famous Duke of Saxe-Weimar, during the thirty years' war, by a veteran officer in a blue riband named Parabère: 'You ask me why I fought the battle,' said Weimar in reply, 'why, sir, I fought it because I thought I should win it;' and then turning to one of his aids, 'Pray,' said he, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the circle, 'who is this old fool in the blue riband?'" Bourdaloue in his sermons lashed the licentiousness of the Court at times with a good deal of freedom. On one of these occasions the courtiers made some complaint to the King. 'Gentlemen,' said he, in answer, 'Bourdaloue has done his duty; it remains for us to do ours, and I wish we may succeed as well.' At another time, Massillon had been preaching upon the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, described by St. Paul, which he represented figuratively as an internal struggle between two persons contending for the mastery. The King went forward to meet him as he descended from the pulpit, and, taking him by the hand, said to him, '*Ah, mon père! que je connais bien ces deux hommes là!*'—Ah, my good father! I, for one, am but too well acquainted with the two gentlemen you have been speaking of!

In the satirical portrait of Madame de Sévigné by her cousin, Count de Bussy, which has been alluded to, he charges her with being too much dazzled by the pageantry of the Court, and too much elated by any little personal attention from the King or Queen. 'One evening,' says he, 'after the King had been dancing a minuet with her, on resuming her seat, which was by my side, she remarked, 'Well, cousin, it must be owned that the King has great qualities; I think he will eclipse the glory of all his predecessors.' I could not,' says Bussy, 'help laughing in her face at the singularity of the *apropos*,



and replied, 'After the proof of heroism which he has just given in dancing with you, my fair cousin, there can be no doubt about it.' She was on the point,' adds Bussy, 'of crying out *Vive le Roi*, before the whole company.'

There would be no great harm in all this, if it were literally true; but as Bussy afterwards disavowed and retracted the whole portrait, it is, of course, unnecessary to attach any importance to this passage. There is no appearance in the letters of excessive admiration of the King. The tone, whenever he is mentioned, is evidently guarded, probably from an apprehension that all letters passing through the post-office were subject to inspection; but the language, though commonly laudatory, does not exceed the bounds of moderation and justice, for Louis XIV. did, in fact, possess great qualities, combined with some great weaknesses, and did eclipse the glory of most of his predecessors. Madame de Sévigné repeatedly gives her opinion, in pretty plain terms, upon the insane passion for war, which was the prominent vice in his character; and, when she praises him, generally does it with discrimination. She commends particularly, on several occasions, his felicity in reply, and the correctness of taste with which he kept up the decorum of his station, or, as the Empress Catherine would have said, enacted the part of king.

The chapter of the King's mistresses is treated in the letters with great discretion; a fact which alone is sufficient to refute Lady Mary Wortley Montague's charge of tittle-tattle, since a lover of mere gossip would have made this topic the principal one throughout the whole correspondence. It is touched upon by Madame de Sévigné very sparingly, and always in the most proper manner. She seems to have had no personal acquaintance with any of the King's successive favorites, excepting Madame de

Maintenon, to whom he was privately married. With her Madame de Sévigné had been somewhat intimate in earlier life, and had sometimes visited her after her marriage to the King. Madame de Montespan is occasionally mentioned, and also Mademoiselle de Fontanges, who was much more remarkable for beauty than for wit. 'The Fontanges,' said Madame, 'though her hair is rather red, is beautiful from head to foot; it is impossible to see any thing prettier, and she is, withal, the best creature in the world; but she has no more wit than a kitten.' The Abbé de Choisy said of her that she was as 'handsome as an angel, and as silly as a basket,'—(*belle comme un ange, et sotte comme un panier.*) The latter similitude is new to us; we have sometimes heard a smiling face compared to a basket of chips.

Among the ladies of the Court out of her own family, Madame de la Fayette seems to have been the most intimate companion of Madame de Sévigné. She was one of the ancestors of the distinguished friend of America, and was celebrated in her day as the author of several very popular novels. She was one of the first modern writers of fiction who had the good taste to rely for effect on the use of natural incidents and characters. Her Princess of Cleves forms the transition from the romance of chivalry to the modern novel, which is intended as a picture of real life. Madame de Cornuel is often mentioned as the wit of the circle. Several of her *bons mots* are quoted, which, however, in general, are not very marvellous. One of the best, and that is merely a play on words, was occasioned by a negotiation between the King and the Pope, which was expected to terminate in the publication of certain papal bulls. While the matter was in progress, the Abbé de Polignac arrived at Paris from Rome, bearing despatches which it was generally thought must be the wished-for documents, but

which proved to be merely preliminary articles. '*Ces ne sont pas des bulles qu'il apporte,*' said Madame de Cornuel, '*mais des préambules.*'

The men of wit and letters constituted the favorite society of Madame de Sévigné, and of these she was particularly intimate with the Duke de la Rochefoucault, Cardinal de Retz, and the Abbé Arnauld. Among the poets her passion was for Corneille, whom she praises throughout the letters in the most exalted terms, and quotes upon all occasions. She preferred him to Racine, and is reported to have said, — though the remark does not appear in her letters, — that the taste for Racine was a mere whim, which would pass away, like the taste for coffee. Both have now stood the test of nearly two centuries, and seem to be gaining rather than losing ground in the public favor. Madame de Sévigné herself, at a later period, became more just to the merit of Racine; and after witnessing the representation of his *Esther* at Court, speaks of it in terms that must satisfy his warmest admirers. Her account of this affair is, perhaps, as agreeable a specimen as can be given of her letters:

'We went to St. Cyr on Saturday, — Madame de Coulanges, Madame de Bagnols, the Abbe Tita, and myself. On arriving we found that places had been kept for us. An attendant told Madame de Coulanges, that Madame de Maintenon had ordered a seat to be reserved for her next to herself. Think what an honor! 'As for you, Madame,' said he to me, 'take your choice.' I placed myself with Madame de Bagnols on the second bench behind the duchesses. Marshal Bellefonte came and took a seat by my side. We listened to the piece with an attention that was remarked, and occasionally threw in, in a low tone, some complimentary expressions, which could not perhaps have been hatched under the *fontanges* \* of all the ladies present. I can

\* Madame de Fontanges had given her name to a particular head-dress.

give you no idea of the extreme beauty of the piece. It is something which cannot be described, and can never be imitated. It is a combination of music, poetry, song, and character, so complete and perfect, that it leaves nothing to be wished. The young ladies, who act the kings and great men, seem to have been made on purpose for their parts. The attention is fixed, and no other regret is felt than that so charming a piece should ever come to an end. It is throughout at once simple, innocent, touching, and sublime. The plot agrees entirely with the Scripture narrative; the chorusses, of which the words are borrowed from the Psalms and the Wisdom of Solomon, are so exquisitely beautiful, that they cannot be heard without tears. I was perfectly charmed, and so was the Marshal, who, leaving his place, went and told the King how much he was delighted, and that he had been sitting by the side of just such a lady as ought to be present at a representation of Esther. The King then came up to me and said, 'I understand, Madame, that you have been pleased.' I replied without confusion, 'Sire, I have been charmed. I cannot tell you how much I have been delighted.' 'Racine,' replied the King, 'has certainly a great deal of talent.' 'That he has, Sire,' said I; 'and these young ladies have certainly a great deal, too. They play their parts as if they had never done any thing else.' 'It is true enough,' replied the King. His Majesty then retired, leaving me an object of general envy. As I was almost the only person who had not been present at any preceding representation, the King was probably pleased with my sincere though quiet expressions of satisfaction. The Prince and Princess came to say a word to me; Madame de Maintenon gave me a look as she retired with the King. I was ready with answers to every one, for I was in good luck. We retired in the evening by torch-light, and supped with Madame de Coulanges, to whom the King had also spoken with great familiarity and kindness. I saw the Chevalier, and gave him an account of my little success, for I see no necessity for making a mystery of these things, as some persons do. He was highly gratified. So there you have the whole story. Mr. de Meaux (Bossuet) talked to me a great deal about you, and so did the Prince, (Condè.) I regret that you were not present, but we cannot be in two places at the same time.'

This is certainly very pleasant *title-tattle*. On fit occasions Madame de Sévigné can discourse in a higher and more serious mood. Her letter to M. de Coulanges on the death of the minister Louvois is an example :

‘I am so much shocked by the sudden death of Mr. de Louvois, that I hardly know what to say of it. He is dead, then!—the great minister,—the powerful man,—who held so high a place,—whose *moi*, as M. Nicole says, was so widely expanded,—who was the centre of so many interests. How much business has he not left unsettled! How many plans and projects but half executed! How many webs of secret intrigue to be unravelled! How many wars just begun to be brought to a close! How many moves still to be made upon the great political chess-board! In vain he begs for a short respite: ‘Oh, my God! allow me a little more time; let me only say *check* to the Duke of Savoy and *mate* to the Prince of Orange.’ ‘No, no, you shall not have a moment,—not a single moment.’ Is it possible to talk on such matters? Alas, no! we must reflect upon them in the silence of the closet. This is the second Minister that has died since you went to Rome, both bound by a hundred million ties to the world: how unlike their characters! and yet how similar their fates!

‘As to your faith in religion, which you say is shaken by what you see going on around you at Rome, permit me to tell you, my dear cousin, that you are altogether wrong. I have heard a person of the best judgment draw a directly opposite conclusion from what passes in that city at the election of a Pope. He was satisfied that the Christian religion must be of divine origin to be able to sustain itself in the midst of so many disorders. This, my dear cousin, is the proper view of the subject. Recollect how often this very city has been bathed in the blood of the martyrs;—that in the earlier ages of the Church, the intrigues of the Conclave always terminated in electing from among the priests the one who appeared to have the greatest share of fortitude and zeal in the cause;—that thirty-seven Popes, undismayed by the certainty of martyrdom, and that in the most cruel form, accepted the place, and were

conducted successively to the stake. If you will only read the history of the Church, you must be satisfied that a religion which was established and continues to subsist by a perpetual miracle, cannot be a mere imagination of men. Men do not imagine in this way. Read St. Augustine's *Truth of Religion*; read Abbadie, — inferior it is true to the great saint, but not unworthy to be brought into comparison with him. Ask the Abbé de Polignac, by the by, how he likes Abbadie. But, my dear cousin, let me beg of you to collect your ideas on this great subject, and not to permit yourself to be led away so lightly into false conclusions.'

We call this pretty good sermonising for a lady. There is a great deal more to the same effect in different parts of the letters. It will be remarked that there is here nothing of the bigotry to particular forms and phrases, which constitutes the religion of so many persons. Madame de Sévigné sees and acknowledges the corruptions existing, not merely in other forms of religion, but in that to which she was herself by birth and education attached. Her correspondent Coulanges, who like his cousin Bussy was one of the best heads in France — *at a song* — witnessed the same corruptions, and concluded from them that religion must be a mere fable. This was also the conclusion drawn by the French philosophers of the following century, who thought that because St. Denys did not really carry his head under his arm from Paris to his own Abbey, this universal frame must be without a mind, — as if there were the most remote connection between the two propositions. Madame de Sévigné reasons differently. She sees, through the clouds of error and corruption, that disfigure its external forms, creeds, and ceremonies, the beauty of religion itself, and feels that a faith which subsists and triumphs in the midst of all these corruptions must have the essential characteristics of divinity. Having fortified herself in this conviction, she does not permit it to carry

her out of the world into convents and penitentiaries; nor does she leave it at home, when she goes into the world, and disgrace her principles by joining in the fashionable vices of the day. She takes her religion with her into society, where it enables her to hold up to a licentious and frivolous Court the edifying example of a moral purity, which even foes could not venture to impeach, and a cheerful, consistent, intelligent piety, graced and made attractive by a union with the highest accomplishments and most exquisite refinements of civilized life.

We do not quite sympathize with Madame de Sévigné in her admiration of Nicole, the Arnauds, and the other 'gentlemen of Port-Royal.' This establishment, which was a sort of monastery, acquired a high reputation from having served for a time as a retreat and residence of the great Pascal. His name threw a kind of celebrity over the whole community, which does not seem to be sustained by any of their published works. The Arnauds kept up the controversy, which he had commenced in his famous *Provincials* between the Molinists and the Jansenists,—the loose and strict moralists of the Catholic Church; but being no longer vivified by his genius, it degenerated into a *caput mortuum* of bitter and angry pamphlets, which were never much read, and are now forgotten. From her great partiality for the Arnauds, and personal intimacy with them, Madame de Sévigné has sometimes been called a Jansenist; and it is not improbable that the worldly fortunes of her family, which were not very brilliant, were injured by this connection; for the Jesuits were all-powerful at Court during the whole period of Louis XIV. But even on this subject she exhibits her usual good sense and good taste, and, with all her admiration of the Arnauds and of Port-Royal, never meddles in her letters with the Jansenist contro-

versy, but, on the contrary, speaks of it, whenever she alludes to it, in a tone of pleasantry as a matter in which she felt no interest.

We must now take leave of Madame de Sévigné, having, we trust, said enough to recommend her to the attention of such of our readers as were not before particularly acquainted with her merits. We cannot but notice in conclusion, — if we may venture to tack a trite moral to a tedious tale, — the strong impression that remains upon the mind after a glance at the period of Louis XIV., of the prodigious superiority of literary talent over every other exercise of intellect, as a means of conferring permanent distinction on its possessors and all with whom they are connected. The age of Louis XIV. is universally considered as one of the brightest periods in the history of civilization. What gave it this splendid pre-eminence? Louis XIV. himself, although, as Madame de Sévigné justly remarks, he possessed great qualities and eclipsed the glory of most of his predecessors, now comes in for a very moderate share of the attention we bestow on the time in which he lived. His generals, Condé, Turenne, Luxemburg, and the rest, — unquestionably men of distinguished talent, — were yet in no way superior to the thunderbolts of war that have wasted mankind from age to age and are now forgotten. His ministers, Fouquet, Colbert, Louvois, have left no marked traces in history. The celebrated beauties that charmed all eyes at the Court festivals have long since mouldered into dust. Yet we still cling with the deepest interest to the memory of the age of Louis XIV., because it was the age of Pascal and Corneille, of Racine, Molière, and La Fontaine, of Bossuet, Fenelon, Bourdaloue, Massillon, La Bruyère, La Rochefoucault, and Madame de Sévigné. The time will probably come, in the progress of civilization, when the military and civic glories of this period



will be still more lightly, because more correctly estimated, than they are now:—when the King, who could make war upon Holland, because he was offended by the device of a burgomaster's seal, and the general who burnt the Palatinate in cold blood, will be looked upon, — with all their refinement and merit of a certain kind, — as belonging essentially to the same class of semi-barbarians with the Tamerlanes and Attilas, the Rolands and the Red Jackets:—when the Fouquets and Colberts will be considered as possessing a moral value very little higher than that of the squirrels and snakes, which they not inappropriately assumed as their emblems. But the maxims of La Rochefoucault will never lose their point, nor the poetry of Racine its charm. The graceful eloquence of Fenelon will flow forever through the pages of Telemachus, and the latest posterity will listen with as much, or even greater pleasure than their contemporaries to the discourses of Bossuet and Massillon. The masterly productions of these great men, and their illustrious contemporaries, will perpetuate to the 'last syllable of recorded time' the celebrity which they originally conferred upon the period when they lived, and crown with a light of perennial and unfading glory the age of Louis XIV.

## WHO WROTE GIL BLAS!\*

[North American Review, Oct. 1827.]

OUR ingenious countryman, Geoffrey Crayon, has somewhere noticed the singular inconsistency in the conduct of certain pedants, who affect to despise the light and popular literary productions of their own time, while they pass their days and nights in studying and illustrating the similar works of the ancient authors. By the same rule, the poems which these critics now reject as immoral or frivolous, will become the favorite objects of investigation with future Hemsterhuis and Ruhnkenii two or three milleniums hence. Such personages, for example, as Sweet Fanny of Timmol, and Tam O'Shanter, however obnoxious at present to the graver part of the community, may then be as interesting to the learned, as the Pyrrhas and Glyceriums of antiquity have always been to the most exemplary modern scholars. There seems, in fact, to be no fixed principles in these matters. St. John, surnamed for his eloquence the Golden Mouth, (*Chrysostom*,) who habitually thundered from his patriarchal pulpit against every thing licentious in word or action, regularly slept with an Aristophanes under his pillow; and as another instance of the same incongruity, we have

\* 1. *Observations Critiques sur le Roman de Gil Blas de Santillane*; par J. A. LLORENTE, Auteur de l'Histoire Critique de l'Inquisition, &c. 8vo. pp. 310. Paris, 1822.

2. *Aventuras de Gil Blas de Santillana, robadas a España y adoptadas en Francia por Monsieur Lesage, restituidas á su Patria y á su Lengua nativa por un Español zeloso que no sufre se burlen de su Nacion*. [J. F. DE ISLA.] 4th edition. 4 vols. 12mo. London, 1815.

here two learned Spanish priests vindicating the claims of their country to the authorship of the popular and not very straitlaced novel of *Gil Blas*, with as much zeal as if the question concerned the Alcalá Polyglott or the *Acta Sanctorum*. They both indeed enter upon the inquiry with a sort of patriotic enthusiasm, which appears at first view ridiculous enough upon such a subject, but which we are half tempted to excuse, when we recollect the somewhat excessive movements of indignation into which we have been occasionally betrayed ourselves by the remarks of certain meddling foreigners upon the weak points in the character of our own country.

Father Isla, the Spanish translator of *Gil Blas*, was himself an original writer of merit. His works are mostly of a gay and humorous cast; but on this subject he is as stern as the Roman Cassius, and will bear no raillery. His wrath at the supposed act of larceny committed by Lesage upon the literary property and reputation of one of his countrymen overflows, as the reader will have seen above, even in the title-page, where he declares himself to be a zealous Spaniard, who will not suffer his nation to be trifled with, and affirms, that he has restored to it a treasure of which it had been robbed by a marauding Frenchman. Llorente, the author of the 'Critical Observations,' is pretty well known to the general reader by several preceding publications, and especially by his history of the Inquisition. He had for forty or fifty years acted as secretary to the branch of this far famed institution which once existed in Spain,\* and, after it was abol-

\* It is rather remarkable that Sir John Copley, lately appointed Lord Chancellor of England, (son of our countryman, the celebrated painter,) in a speech on the Catholic question, delivered in Parliament in the month of March, 1827, should have represented the Inquisition as then existing in Spain. Unwearied efforts have been made by the clergy ever since the overthrow of the constitution to obtain the reestablishment of this tribunal, but hitherto without effect. In the winter of 1825-6, the Council of Castile

ished by the Cortes, revealed to the world the secrets of the prisonhouse of which he had so long kept the keys and records. As respects the question now at issue, Llorente, whose passions, at the time when he wrote upon it, had been cooled by the frosts of seventy or eighty winters, discusses it with rather more moderation than Father Isla, but still with evident and very deep feeling. He takes at times a tone bordering on the pathetic, and appeals to the generosity of the French; representing it as a thing below the magnanimity of a great nation, abounding in all sorts of literary riches, to despoil a comparatively poorer neighbor of this pearl of great price. Assuming at the close an air of solemnity, he asserts, that whatever may be the verdict of contemporary critics, the grand tribunal of posterity will certainly decide the question in favor of the claims of Spain.

We are not sufficiently versed in the details of this controversy to be able to say exactly at what period it arose, or to mention all the various alternations of opinion, and successive triumphs of one party or the other, which have probably marked its progress. We believe, however, that the contemporaries of Lesage entertained some doubts as to his full and exclusive right to be considered the original author of *Gil Blas*. The compilers of a French biographical dictionary, published in 1771, mention the work with the *Bachelor of Salamanca*, *Guzman de Alfarache*, and *Le Diable Boiteux*, among the author's imitations or translations from the Spanish, as if he had himself acknowledged it to be so, as he did the others. It would seem, however, that an opinion expressed in this

and the Council of State, the two highest political corporations in the kingdom, both under the influence of the clergy, joined in three successive representations to the king in favor of the measure, with which the king as often refused to comply. These circumstances were commented upon at the time in all the newspapers in Europe, and ought not to have escaped the attention of the attorney general of Great Britain.

way, without explanation or qualification, must have arisen from the carelessness and ignorance of the person who gave it, rather than the probability of the fact, which, if true, was certainly not so notorious or undisputed as this article would make it appear. The assertion proves nevertheless, that there was a current report of this description. Voltaire has somewhere thrown out hints of the same kind; but we are not aware that any formal disquisition had been published on the question until the appearance of the Spanish translation of *Father Isla*, preceded by a preliminary discourse, in which the worthy Jesuit boldly and peremptorily pronounces Lesage to be a literary pirate.

It must be owned, however, that the learned Father deals in round and angry assertion rather than argument; and upon looking a little narrowly into the substance of his reasoning, we do not find any distinct objection whatever to the claims of the French author, excepting the authority of the above-mentioned biographical dictionary. This is quoted and much relied upon by *Isla*, but amounts in reality to nothing; because it is perfectly evident that the compiler had paid no attention to the subject, possessed no precise information upon it, and did not mean to treat it as a questionable point. He obviously had in his mind the idea, that the work was an avowed translation or imitation from the Spanish. *Father Isla*, notwithstanding his confident tone, has no direct proof whatever to support his assertion; nor has he attempted even to make it out by internal evidence, as he naturally should have done, and as *Llorente* very properly has. The system of *Isla* is, therefore, wholly baseless as presented by him. In order to show in what manner Lesage became possessed of the Spanish manuscript of *Gil Blas*, he mentions a report that he had been for several years attached to the French embassy in Spain; and that during

this time he formed an acquaintance with an Andalusian lawyer, who confided to him this and some other manuscripts, which were too free in their remarks on political subjects to appear in Spain. The first of these facts, if true, would rather serve to confute, than to establish the system of Father Isla, since a long residence in Spain under such circumstances would furnish the most plausible account that could be given of the manner in which a foreign writer might have obtained the rich mass of Spanish materials employed in this novel. The story of the Andalusian lawyer and his manuscripts is too vague to deserve much attention. On the whole, our Jesuit seems to have given proof of zeal in a great measure without knowledge; and to have, in fact, done little or nothing toward establishing the claims of his country to the authorship of Gil Blas. The extreme confidence which he felt in an opinion in favor of which he had so little to say, may perhaps be thought to make it probable that there prevailed among the literary men with whom he associated a general presumption to this effect, which formed the real ground of his belief in a proposition which he evidently had not taken the trouble to examine.

In the midst of the graver collisions that came on soon after in both hemispheres, and fully occupied the attention of the French and Spanish nations, the public lost sight for a time of this dispute about the origin of Gil Blas, and we do not find that any thing of note was published respecting it until the year 1818, when Count François de Neufchâteau read to the French Academy a memoir, entitled, *An Investigation of the Question whether Lesage was the Original Author of Gil Blas, or whether he borrowed it from the Spanish*. In this work, which was printed in the following year, 1819, the Count sustains the claims of his countryman; and in the year 1820, he published in Paris a new edition of Gil Blas,

with notes, in which he defends the same system. Llorente was then residing at Paris, deeply engaged in his history of the Inquisition and other literary labors of a very serious and important character. His patriotism (generally most sensitive in persons away from home) took the alarm at this inroad on the national glory of Old Castile, and he immediately undertook the work now before us, which he submitted to the Academy in the year 1820, and not long after printed. The Count replied in a subsequent memoir, presented to the Academy on the 20th of January, 1822, and entitled, *An Examination of the New System in regard to the Authorship of Gil Blas, in answer to the Critical Observations of M. Llorente*. This production also was printed, and here the controversy appears to have come to a close, both parties having made out their respective opinions to their own satisfaction, and left the decision to the public. We regret to say, that we have not seen either of the memoirs of the Count de Neufchâteau, and that we have no other knowledge of the nature of his arguments, excepting such as we have derived from the work of Llorente. We are aware that this is an extremely suspicious source; and while we candidly admit, that we feel a strong leaning toward the conclusions of the worthy secretary of the Inquisition, we also freely allow, and even exhort the reader to make any deductions from the weight of our authority on the subject, which he may think proper, on account of our imperfect and partial acquaintance with the argument. A defence of almost any proposition, drawn up by a careful and able writer, will appear pretty plausible until the other side has been heard. Such, indeed, is the *prestige* produced by a powerful and acute logician, that the celebrated Henry the Fourth of France, after listening to the opposite counsel on the two sides of some important case,

declared that he did not know how it came about, but that they must certainly both be right.

Having thus cleared our consciences by apprising the reader of the real extent of our knowledge, and putting him fairly on his guard, we proceed without further preliminaries to state concisely, but as we hope with clearness and, as far as may be, a rigorous impartiality, the tenor of the argument on both sides of this question. It may perhaps appear to some as of too trifling a character to engage the attention of a journal habitually devoted to graver subjects. Let those who think so pass at once to the next article, and take their fill of Rail Roads, Fortifications, Claims on France, South American Politics, or whatever it may happen to treat upon. For ourselves, we think we may well venture to review what two Spanish priests and a Count of the French empire were not afraid to write, nor the first Academy in Europe to listen to; and we know not why the question, *Who wrote Gil Blas?* should not be as interesting to the public as, *Who wrote Eikon Basilike?* *Who wrote Junius,* *Ossian,* *Chatterton,* *Homer?* or, finally, *Who wrote Waverley?* the impenetrable riddle that so long baffled the curiosity of the present age, and has lately been so happily solved by the great unknown himself.

To the question, *Who wrote Gil Blas?* the natural answer is, undoubtedly, in the first instance, Lesage. A man must be held to be the writer of his own books, as he is considered in law the father of his wife's children, until the contrary be proved. *Pater est quem nuptiæ demonstrant;* and a title-page affords the same presumption of authorship as a marriage register of paternity. The burden of proof rests, therefore, in this case upon those who endeavor to invalidate the pretensions of the French dramatist.

The first and principal argument which they allege, is



the strong and deep Spanish coloring which pervades every part of the work, down to the nicest and most minute details. It is no very difficult thing for a poet or a novelist to lay the scene of his fictions in a foreign country, and to borrow a few outlandish names, dresses and decorations, to give his localities an air of probability. This is done every day by writers of moderate as well as first rate talent. It is perfectly natural that an Englishman should have produced the play of Julius Cæsar, or a Scotchman the romance of *Quentin Durward*. But the case changes, when the familiarity with foreign objects and manners supposed by the style and fable goes beyond a certain point, and when the substance, as well as the form and coloring, displays in a strong manner the peculiar characteristics of some remote age or distant nation. If such a work, for example, as Mr. Hope's *Anastasius*, the very tissue of which seems, as it were, to be wrought out of innumerable minute observations on foreign objects, in which every chapter and paragraph exhibits unquestionable proof that the author was an eyewitness of the scenes he describes; if, we say, a work of this kind were to be published by a person who had never been abroad, the world would conclude without much hesitation, that he had imposed upon them as his own the production of some other pen. We readily believe that Mr. Moore may have written the poem of *Lalla Rookh*, in which the substantially European train of thought and feeling is discovered at every turn, through the thin texture of oriental imagery with which it is covered. But if Galland had published the *Arabian Nights*, or Sir William Jones, his translation of the Indian drama of *Sacotalá* as his own, the public, we imagine, would have easily detected the fraud. And in all such cases the presumption of a foreign original would be much heightened, if a writer had brought out other works of a very

similar kind, as avowed translations, or close imitations of foreign models. If two or three volumes of the *Arabian Nights* had appeared as acknowledged translations from the Arabic, and the rest had been afterward published by the French editor as his own, it is hardly probable that any competent judge would have been so far deceived by this pretension, as not to see that they were all parts of the same collection. Now, in this respect, the present case is precisely similar. Lesage published in the course of his life a considerable number of novels and tales, long and short, all of which, excepting *Gil Blas*, are avowed translations or imitations from the Spanish. They also all suppose, in general, the same materials and resources that must have belonged to the author of that work. There is, therefore, a strong presumption that they are all fruits of one common stock. The weight of an argument of this kind depends wholly, in each particular case, upon the extent to which the work in question is essentially foreign in form and substance, and upon the greater or less degree of difficulty with which the defect of personal observation might have been supplied by study. In some instances the presumption amounts to a certainty. No Frenchman or Englishman could have possibly identified his whole intellectual nature so completely with one resulting from a different condition of society, as to have written the *Arabian Nights*, or *Sacontalá*. In the case before us the argument has less force, because the state of civilization is nearly the same in France and Spain, and the knowledge of mere facts, however minute and intimate, might possibly be obtained abroad. The presumption would therefore hardly exceed a strong probability: but if the conclusion were corroborated by any direct evidence, it might be received as nearly certain.

Llorente, aware that this is the main point in the ar-

gument, enlarges upon it a good deal, and, as we think, makes out a very strong case. It would of course be impossible to recapitulate here all the particular passages in the novel, which prove the minute acquaintance of the author with the political, geographical, and statistical situation of Spain, and with the manners of its inhabitants. We shall note a few of the most striking examples.

It is well known that the description of the character and conduct of the Duke of Lerma and the Count Duke of Olivares, successively prime ministers and confidential favorites of Philip the Third and Fourth, is historically correct. It is given with a degree of minuteness, that almost supposes of itself a personal acquaintance with the concerns of the Spanish Court. The face and person of Olivares are painted with a spirit and discrimination which must have required very close, accurate, and often repeated personal observation. Nor are there even now, anywhere in print, any materials which would supply to a foreigner the defect of such observation for this purpose. The same conformity to historical truth pervades the minor incidents of the story, and even such as are probably supposed in general to be wholly fictitious. The adventures of Philip the Fourth and Lucretia, daughter of the Marquis of Marialva and the actress Laura, are said to be historical. The fruit of this intrigue was the Prince Don John of Austria, second of the name, and not the celebrated champion of Christendom, who arrested the progress of the Turkish arms at the seafight of Lepanto, and who was an illegitimate son of Charles the Fifth. The mother is represented in the novel as being seized with compunctions of conscience on account of her illicit connexion with the king, and as retiring from the world and taking the veil in the convent of the Incarnation. This institution was founded at Madrid by Philip the

Third, in fulfilment of the last will of his deceased queen, Margaret; and no persons were admitted into it but such as were in some way connected with the royal family. A foreigner could hardly have been aware of this curious little circumstance, or if he had known it would have probably mentioned it in connexion with the story. Gil Blas, on the contrary, merely states the fact, that Lucretia entered this convent without giving the reason why she preferred it to any other. The account of the domestic occurrences in the family of Olivares, of his natural son Don Julian de Valcarrel, afterwards legitimated under the name of Don Henry Philip de Guzman, and married to the daughter of the Duke of Frias, is also conformable throughout to facts. Nor was it so easy, in the time of Lesage, to become acquainted with private incidents of this description, occurring in a distant country, as it is now, when, thanks to the newspapers, every man of any note in the world lives in a glass house, and regularly finds in the morning's gazette a detailed history of his own transactions of the preceding day.

The other characters of this work are treated with equal fidelity. Don Rodrigo de Calderon is a real personage, though not mentioned by his title of Marquis de Siete Iglesias. Thirty or forty of the principal Spanish and Portuguese noblemen are introduced in the course of the work, and their titles and dignities are described with perfect accuracy. This is a point of learning of which we may appreciate the difficulty and delicacy, when we recollect that the mass of French writers have never been able, up to the present hour, to obtain any distinct notion of the proper application of the common English appellatives of *Master* and *Sir*, but constantly confound and misapply them at every turn. Real names of persons in the lower walks of life are also employed, where we should hardly expect to find them. Thus, among the

patients of Dr. Oloroso of Madrid, is mentioned the bookseller, *Fernando de Buendia*; and it appears, in fact, from the titlepages of the books printed in the reign of Philip the Fourth, that a person of this name was then one of the principal booksellers at Madrid. Most of the names that are not historical are significant in the Spanish language; and this circumstance proves, perhaps still more strongly than the correct use of Spanish names and titles, the Castilian original of the book. It would be next to impossible for a foreigner to manufacture thirty or forty names of this kind, which would completely satisfy a Spanish ear; and Llorente assures us, that they are all perfectly idiomatical, and of a natural construction. Of this number are the Doctors *Sangrado*, *Oloroso*, *Cuchillo*; the innkeepers, *Forero* (*stranger*, more commonly *forastero*) and *Majuelo*; the apothecary, *Apuntador* (*prompter*), who advises Doña Mergelina to exchange her *escudero* for a *dueña*; the swindler of Toledo, Don Vicente de *Buenagarra* (*Gripewell*), and so forth. The Count de Neufchâteau remarks upon the great number of these significant names, but affects to consider them as of little importance to the question. We must beg leave to differ from him upon this point, for the reason just mentioned. Let the Count attempt to fabricate thirty or forty significant English proper names, in such a way that they shall appear idiomatical and natural to the English; and if he succeeds, we shall admit that he is in the right; and shall further admit, that he has done thirty or forty times as much as any one of his countrymen ever did before. The extraordinary ill success of the French writers in inventing names for their English personages, and even in transcribing English names of great notoriety, is perfectly well known, and clearly shows the intrinsic difficulty of what M. de Neufchâteau seems to think a very simple affair. Among the names which he regards

as significant, the Count enumerates that of *Catalina*, alias Sirena, mistress of Don Rodrigo de Calderon. This fact does not argue a very intimate acquaintance with the Spanish language. Llorente justly remarks, that *Catalina* is frequently used in Spain as a christian name for females, but even he does not mention, and apparently did not recollect at the moment, that it is the Spanish form of *Catherine*.

The knowledge of the geography of Spain, and of the manners and customs of the people supposed in Gil Blas, is very extensive, and the details appear to be, in general, perfectly exact, and almost affectedly particular. Remark, for instance, the description of the inkhorn purchased by the hero of the story and his associates, when they were preparing to enact the part of inquisitors at the expense of the Jew, Samuel Simon. It consisted of two pieces of horn attached to each other by a cord, one to hold the ink, and the other a separate one to contain the pens. 'Every Spaniard,' says Llorente, 'knows that this is a correct description of what is called a notary's inkhorn, because notaries always take such a one with them whenever they go out, for use if occasion should offer.' Again; Gil Blas describes himself as walking in the streets of Valencia, and seeing a crowd of persons collected round a particular house, where, upon approaching nearer, he read the inscription in gold letters upon a black marble tablet, *La posada de los Representantes*. This building was the theatre; and the nature of the inscription, which means *Lodging of the Actors*, is explained by the circumstance, that in the time of Philip the Third and Fourth, the company was in fact usually lodged in the theatre itself. This usage never existed in France, and had been discontinued in Spain long before the time of Lesage. Once more; the chambermaid of Anna de Guevara, nurse to Philip the Fourth, obtains from the king,

through the influence of her mistress, the archdeaconry of Granada, for Don Ignacio de Ipiña; *which benefice*, says the author, *being situated in a country acquired by conquest was in the gift of the king*. This passage supposes an accurate knowledge of the ecclesiastical constitution of the Spanish monarchy. 'In fact,' says Llorente, 'the king, prior to the concordat of 1753, conferred no church dignities whatever, excepting those of which the patronage belonged by some specific title to the crown. Such, by the effect of a special bull from the Pope, was the case with those which lay within the territory conquered from the Moors.' Now we do not mean to say, that Lesage might not accidentally, in the course of his Spanish reading, have made himself acquainted with any, or all of these particulars, and a hundred others of the same kind. But these are only specimens of the general manner of the work, which is wrought up in this minute and highly finished style, like a fine Dutch painting, from one end to the other. A Frenchman might have met with a description of a notary's inkstand, or learned the fact that the actors in Spain formerly lodged in the playhouse; but could hardly have written four volumes, of which almost every line is pregnant with some allusion nearly as precise and pointed as these. A writer who studies the manners and history of a foreign nation for the purpose of employing them as materials in works of fiction, commonly makes the most of his acquisitions, and tells the world nearly all he knows. Mr. Thomas Moore and Mr. Robert Southey, wrought up, we imagine, in their Lalla Rookhs and Thalabas, their whole stock of oriental learning; and that nothing might be lost, they carefully set down in the notes what they could not find room for in the body of the poem. In Gil Blas, the knowledge supposed is not less copious and accurate, than that which is actually brought out. The most curious circumstances, or those

which a foreigner would infallibly consider such, are often suppressed, as in the instance of the convent of the Incarnation, alluded to above. We conclude, on the whole, that the fidelity of costume is carried in this novel to such an extent in all its branches, as to create a strong presumption that it could only have been written by a native Spaniard.\*

\* We will add here another example of this minute exactness, taken from concerns of a lower order. Gil Blas, in giving his account of the interior of the cavern inhabited by the robbers, remarks, that he saw in the stable an ample provision of *straw* and *barley*. The reader would probably pass over this trifling circumstance without perceiving that it indicated any local peculiarity; but if he were called upon to describe the contents of a stable from his own knowledge, he would find, perhaps, that instead of *straw* and *barley*, he had written *hay* and *oats*. Every one who has been in Spain will recollect, that the former articles are universally employed as the food of horses and mules, to the exclusion of the latter; but the fact is probably known to very few foreigners, especially of the character and habits of Lesage.

The habits of the robbers, as described in Gil Blas, are the same with those which still prevail among the persons who exercise this adventurous profession in the Peninsula. In proof of this, we add the following extract from a letter addressed by one of our countrymen, a lieutenant in the navy, to an American gentleman residing at Madrid, under date of Córdoba, April 17, 1827, in which he gives an account of a robbery of the diligence at Manzanares, a few days before. The letter was of course not intended for the press, but is written in a spirited style, and does credit to its author, whose name, not having his authority to publish it, we suppress.

'My dear Sir, — I arrived here yesterday with sound ribs and a whole skin, but sadly out of pocket, and with my trunk in a very emaciated condition. I need not tell you that we have been robbed, for this you will have either heard or surmised already; but there will be no harm in saying something of the where and the how, so that when you come to the same spot, you may enjoy the pleasures of anticipation, and know exactly the formalities that are to be gone through on such occasions. It was, then, about three leagues before reaching Manzanares, that this robbery took place, on Thursday at two o'clock. We were going along very quietly, with our guard of four men in advance, and the conductor, who was in the *rotunda*, was talking with me, when we were suddenly interrupted by the discharge of muskets, followed immediately by the clattering of hoofs and loud and confused cries. The next moment the cause of this tumult was in sight, and the guards and their pursuers were seen flying rapidly past us, the lat-



The nice observations of the critics have nevertheless discovered in Gil Blas a considerable number of errors, more or less obvious, principally in the manner of writing the names of places and persons. Some of these are so glaring, that it is difficult to reconcile them with any theory in respect to the author, and they must be viewed by all as wholly accidental. The rest rather

ter discharging their carbines upon the guards, and urging their horses to come up with them. It was an animated scene this, such as I had frequently seen on canvass in the spirited little pictures of Wouvermans. The robbers were eight in number, and were variously dressed, many in sheep skins, some in montero caps, and others with handkerchiefs on their heads; they each, however, had two pair of pistols stuck into the front of the saddle, a sabre at the side, and a carabino in the moment of preparation thrown over the saddle in front. Besides this ornament, some had a second carabine hung to their saddles, with a long knife stuck in their belts.

In the mean time one of the guard had fled the field entirely, and the other three men were off at a respectful distance. One of the robbers, who had remained beside the postillion, now made us get down into the road, so that if the diligence advanced it would have to pass over us. The conductor, as more experienced in these matters, placed himself on his hands and knees, like a frog when he is about to jump, and we all, by order of the fellow who was taking such good care of us, imitated his example; the more readily, because he was a young man of not more than twenty, a kind of Gil Blas at the business, and was a good deal agitated, and for that reason the more dangerous to unarmed men. On the coming up of the captain, who returned to the diligence, leaving five of his party to keep the guard in check, we were told to get up and not to be uneasy, that no harm was intended to our persons. He called for the hat of the conductor and told us to put our money and articles into it; he then ordered the conductor to mount upon the diligence and throw down the baggage. Our keys were then called for, and a curious and inquisitive sort of fellow commenced overhauling the trunks. Another fellow stood by with a long bag which opened in the middle, into which the accepted articles were stowed. In this way my *go-a-shore* watch went to look after the parade one, and most of the contents of my trunk followed the same example. When this fellow had finished his investigation, and the other passengers were stowing away their things, I asked, if what was left was mine, and being told, yes, I began to pack up, and no longer encountered that resistance in shutting my trunk, that I had met with the day before at Madrid. Down it went at the first push. The captain of the band allowed the trunk of the lady who was with us to pass unexamined, and began a long apology to us

tend to confirm the supposition, that the work is a translation from the Spanish, because they are most naturally accounted for by considering them as the errors of a person transcribing names with which he was not perfectly familiar. We shall mention one or two of each class.

for the trouble he was giving us; he said, that it was not his fault,—that they had refused to pardon him, and to employ him in conveying the diligence. "*Soy Felipe Cano*," says he, "*y, por mal nombre, el Cacaruco*." He told the conductor to tell his employers, that if they would procure his pardon and receive him into their service, he would guard the diligence for three months gratis.

'When they had completely gone through with their undertaking, they went quickly off in sight of several *galeras* that had halted at no great distance from us, and in about a quarter of an hour disappeared in a hollow that lay to the right of the road. They had at first taken away the two horses that led the team, but the postillion followed them, and begged the captain to give him up the poorest, to which he at last consented. When the robbers had disappeared our guard returned, and commenced railing at the authorities of the neighboring villages, who, they said, were protecting the robbers openly; the three guards had behaved extremely well, for we could distinctly hear them challenge the assailants to come to them man for man and that they would meet them. Glory, however, was not the object of these sturdy *Manchegos*, and they were content to have succeeded in their enterprise. On arriving at Manzanares, among the crowd that came out to hear the story of our disaster, was a little girl of seven or eight years old, the daughter of Cacaruco. She was well dressed and clean; the poor little thing was very much disconcerted by the attention she attracted, and hid herself from our observation behind the door of the stable. Though we were not much indebted to Mr. Cacaruco for the service he had done us, there was no feeling of animosity towards this innocent child, who seemed entirely ignorant of her father's vocation. It appears, that the innkeepers have taken a hatred to the diligence from its carrying travellers, (who used frequently to loiter from inn to inn,) so rapidly through the country, that only a few of the public houses gain anything by their passage; and it is thought that their instigations have as much to do with the frequent robbery of the diligence, as the necessities of the robbers themselves. This may, at least, account for the impunity with which Cacaruco might have returned, and perhaps did return, to his own house, situated in a village, on the very night of having committed so bold an offence, and of having so publicly avowed it.'

Since the first publication of this article, the writer of the letter quoted has published a fuller narrative of the adventure in his interesting volume of travels, "*A Year in Spain*."

In giving an account of his journey from Madrid to Oviedo, at the beginning of the fourth volume, Gil Blas mentions that he slept the first night at Alcalá de Henares, and the second, at Segovia. This is an error of the same kind, as if a man should say, that in travelling from Boston to New York, he slept the first night at Newburyport, and the second at Providence. Alcalá de Henares and Segovia are both among the most considerable and noted cities in Spain. The former is well known for its university, which is one of the first in the country, and familiar to scholars as that where the Complutensian Polyglott (so called from *Complutum*, the Roman name of Alcalá,) was printed by order of Cardinal Ximenes. The latter was distinguished in its better days, as a great manufacturing town, and is now remarkable for its Moorish Alcázar, its Roman aqueduct, and its Gothic cathedral. The first of these edifices derives some little additional celebrity from being the place in which the author of Gil Blas has laid the scene of his hero's imprisonment.\* Alcalá is about ten English miles east of Madrid, and Segovia about

\* The Alcázar of Segovia, as the name indicates, was originally a Moorish palace. It has also been occupied as a residence by the kings of Spain, and large additions were made to it in the time of Philip the Second, under the direction of Herrera, the architect of the Escorial. It is still in perfect preservation, and is now appropriated to a military school, the only one in Spain. The writer of this article visited the Alcázar of Segovia in the summer of 1826, and had an opportunity of witnessing from its upper windows what Don André de Tordesillas represented as the *flowery banks of the Eresma*, and the *delicious valley that separates the two Castiles*; but he found the view, as Gil Blas is said to have done, very much embellished by the warder's description. The Eresma is a meagre stream, and the country through which it passes, like the greater part of Old and New Castile, is wholly bare of wood, and presents a monotonous and melancholy aspect. The aqueduct of Segovia is one of the most remarkable Roman works of the kind in existence. It is in perfect preservation, and is still employed to supply the city with water. It consists of two lines of arches, one above the other, constructed with large square masses of granite,

thirty west. The critics are sadly at loss to imagine for what reason, or by what accident Gil Blas should have been made to pass through the former place on his way to the latter; as it is impossible to suppose that the author, whether native or foreign, could have fallen into a geographical error of this magnitude. Father Isla believes that Lesage introduced this blunder on purpose, in order to *mistify* the public, and make it appear improbable that the work could be a translation from the Spanish; but this system, though ingenious, is not to us completely satisfactory. Count de Neufchâteau makes no attempt to account for the circumstance, and declares it to be wholly mysterious and incomprehensible. It is evident, however, that the error must have been either voluntary

without cement, and in the highest part is a hundred and two feet high. The Gothic cathedral is one of the finest in Spain; so that the three nations who within the memory of man have successively possessed the Peninsula, have each left at this particular spot a specimen of the very best manner of its peculiar style of architecture.

Every thing at Segovia, excepting these three monuments, has an air of decay, or rather of complete ruin. This city formerly contained the greatest cloth manufactories in Spain. These are said to have employed, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, no less than seventy-two thousand persons, a number which would give, on the usual principles of calculation, a population of at least three hundred thousand souls. The present population is not thought to exceed five thousand, who depend for subsistence upon the military academy and the church. The decay of industry in this and the other once flourishing and wealthy cities of the interior of Spain, took place with almost inconceivable rapidity soon after the commencement of the seventeenth century. Seville, which contained sixteen thousand looms for weaving silk in the preceding century, had, in the year 1636, only sixty. Segovia sunk at the same time. The quantity of wool washed at Cuenca fell off, between 1620 and 1640, from sixty-two thousand five hundred quintals, to two thousand five hundred. This unexampled revolution in the economy of the country was the real cause of the decline of the political consequence of Spain; but it is not very easy to account for the fact itself. No satisfactory reason has yet been assigned for it; and it must apparently have been owing to a combination of disastrous accidents. The expulsion of the Moors, in 1614, probably did more than any other single circumstance.

or accidental. If we reject the supposition that it was voluntary, and also regard it as too glaring to have been accidental in the author, the only possible remaining theory is, that it was an error of the transcriber. This is accordingly the one adopted by Llorente; and though not unattended with difficulty, is infinitely less improbable than either of the others, especially if we suppose the transcriber to have been a foreigner. Admitting this solution, it is of no great importance what may have been the word which the transcriber had thus metamorphosed into *Alcalá de Henares*, for the name is unfortunately written out in the French work with a most distressing fulness and accuracy. Father Isla, in his translation, substitutes *las Rosas*, a village about half way between Madrid and Segovia. Llorente prefers *Galapagar*, another station on the same route. Either of these names might easily enough be transformed by a foreigner into Alcalá, but we do not see how it could have branched out into the fatal addition *de Henares*. Gil Blas is represented in two other several passages, as taking the same journey from Madrid to Segovia, and as changing horses at *Colmenar*. This is at least as near to Alcalá as either of the other names, and is, to our minds, the one which offers the highest degree of probability; but like them, it leaves the *de Henares* wholly unaccounted for. In these cases it is not to be expected that every difficulty should be explained. Our private opinion, which we propose with all proper diffidence, is, that this is a piece of work botched up at two successive operations. We believe that Lesage, in the first place, wrote *Alcalá* by mistake, for *Colmenar*, and at some other time when comparing his localities with a map, where the name is commonly laid down at full length, inserted the addition *de Henares*. We are not, however, unduly tenacious of this theory,

and shall freely relinquish it, if any of our exegetical readers will propose a better one.\*

In attempting to detect and correct the errors of Lesage, the worthy secretary of the Inquisition has fallen into one himself, which is the more remarkable, as it concerns the geography of Madrid, the place of his habitual residence. Gil Blas informs us, that on his first arrival in that metropolis, he brought a letter of introduction from a merchant of Segovia, with whom he had made acquaintance on the road, to the *Seigneur* (a strong Spanish idiom) Matthew Melendez, a cloth merchant, who lived in the *Puerta del Sol*, at the corner of the *Rue des Bahutiers*, or *Trunkmakers' Street*; in Spanish, *Calle de los Cofreros*. The *Puerta del Sol*, or Gate of the Sun, as our readers are aware, is the principal place of public resort at Madrid, being used as an exchange, like the upper part of State Street, in Boston, which it sufficiently resembles in extent and shape. One of the gates, which bore this name, formerly stood at this spot; but, in consequence of the enlargement of the city, the entrance to this quarter was removed, in the reign of Charles the Third, to another point, about half a mile off, where a new gate, called the *Puerta de Alcalá* was erected, which is considered the most elegant construction of the kind in Europe. In this description of the residence of the cloth merchant, Melendez, Llorente conceives that he has detected an error. All the inhabitants of Madrid, he assures us, well

\* Since writing the above, we find, on looking into a more detailed map of the country round Madrid, that *Colmenar* is laid down with the addition *el Viejo*, which gives a little more latitude to the transcriber. The next station on the same road is *Manzanares*, which is perhaps quite as near to *Alcalá de Henares*, as either of the others. The two places suggested by Father Isla and Llorente are both upon another road that also leads from Madrid to Segovia; but as Gil Blas on two other occasions is made to take the one which passes through *Colmenar*, it is more natural to suppose that this was intended here also.

know, that of the streets opening on the Puerta del Sol, there is none which bears the name of *Calle de los Cofre-ros*. Having thus stated the difficulty, he endeavors to solve it by supposing that the transcriber wrote by mistake Puerta del Sol for Puerta de *Guadalajara*; and affirms, that by substituting the latter name for the former, the description may be made to agree exactly with the reality; by which he must be supposed to mean, that there is such a street as the *Calle de los Cofre-ros*, near the Puerta de *Guadalajara*. If it be rather hard to imagine how *Colmenar* or *las Rosas* could bloom out into *Alcalá de Henares*, it is still more puzzling to conceive in what way *Guadalajara* could dwindle into *Sol*. This *sun*, it must be owned, would be shorn of his beams to an alarming degree.

But this is not the only, nor the strongest objection that may be made to the justice of this somewhat hypercritical sally of the worthy secretary of the Inquisition. In the first place, there is no such gate at Madrid as the *Puerta de Guadalajara*. This latter city lies beyond *Alcalá*, on the banks of the same river *Henares*, and the road that leads to it from Madrid passes through the *Puerta de Alcalá*. There is, it is true, a small place or *plazuela*, called *Plaza de la Puerta de Guadalajara*, near the *Plaza Mayor*, and this may perhaps have been meant by *Llorente*; but, unluckily for him, there is no such street opening upon the square as *Calle de los Cofre-ros*. Finally, notwithstanding his assurance that it is a thing well known to all the inhabitants of Madrid, that there is no such street opening upon the Puerta del Sol, it appears that the street of this name does in fact open upon that place, and is still to be found there precisely where *Gil Blas* left it, and where it escaped the observation of our clear-sighted critic during the forty or fifty years of his residence in its neighborhood. In the list of the streets

given in the Madrid Directory, it is mentioned in the following terms. '*La Calle de los Cofreros es un callejon que sale á la Puerta del Sol entre la calle de Preciados y la del Arenal.*' Hardly knowing which of two such imposing authorities as the Directory and *ci-devant* secretary of the Inquisition ought to be regarded as the more trustworthy, and happening at the present moment to enjoy (in our personal capacity) the advantage of a residence at Madrid, we felt it a duty to verify the state of this important fact, by our own immediate observation; and are now able to inform the public, that upon repairing to the Puerta del Sol for this purpose, we read at the corner of a narrow street opening upon that place in the exact spot indicated by the Directory, the words, *Calle de los Cofreros*, inscribed in black letters upon a white stone placed in the wall of the house on the left hand, which is doubtless the identical building, or its successor, formerly occupied by the Signor Matthew Melendez, cloth merchant, and tenanted temporarily by his worthy guest, the Signor Gil Blas. It may be proper to add, in justice to the eyesight of the Signor Llorente, that of all the streets and lanes, (eight in number,) which open upon the Puerta del Sol, this is by much the smallest, and may not unnaturally have escaped the notice of an observer whose vision was probably at the time a good deal obscured by continually groping about the blind passages and subterranean dungeons of the Inquisition, of which, during his residence at Madrid, he kept the keys, and has since revealed the secrets. So much for the infallibility of criticism.

The other errors in the writing of names and places are, in general, pretty easily accounted for, on the supposition that they were made by a foreign transcriber not familiar with the geography and history of the narrative, and therefore tend to confirm the supposition that the



work is of Spanish extraction. Thus the reputed father of the natural son of the Count Duke de Olivares, is mentioned by Lesage under the name of Don Francisco de *Valeasar*, and not, as Llorente states, *Valdeazar*. His real name was Don Francisco de Valcarcel, and his reputed son accordingly bore, as above mentioned, previously to his legitimation, that of Don Julian de Valcarcel. It is easy to see that this is an error of transcription, and that Lesage, was not only not sufficiently familiar with the history of the period, to have written this part of the narrative himself, but that he did not feel interest enough in the question of the historical truth or falsehood of the story, to verify even this singular anecdote, by reference to authority. The young man in question was created on his legitimation, Duke of *San Lucar*, a well known place near Cadiz, which Lesage writes *San Lucat*. In the curious account of the marriage of the Count Duke's daughter, there are two or three errors of the same kind. The principal suitors for her hand are the sons of the two chief branches of the house of Guzman, to which Olivares himself belonged. One of them, son of the Duke de Medina Sidonia, is mentioned by Lesage under the title of Count de *Niebles*, by mistake, for *Niebla*. The person preferred by the Count Duke is represented by Lesage as belonging to the family of Guzman de *Abrados*, by mistake, for *Abiados*. These are both obviously errors of transcription. Several others of the same kind are mentioned by Llorente, but these will serve as specimens.

There is also a passage not alluded to by either of the critics before us, containing, as we think, a fault of this class, which we are induced to note, as the correction of it considerably increases the effect of one of the pleasantest anecdotes in the book. The passage in question is the epitaph on the soul of the Licentiate Pedro Garcias,

which is given in Spanish, by Lesage, in the following form. '*Aquí está encerrada el alma del Licenciado Pedro Garcias.*' It is quite evident that the true reading is *enterada*, the inscription being a parody on the common epitaphial formula, *Here lies interred the body, &c.* Lesage, mistaking the *t* for a *c*, has introduced a word which is unsuitable to the context, and is never employed in an epitaph. The corrected reading justifies the mirth of the thoughtless student, who is represented as having been greatly diverted with the idea of *une âme enfermée*; a soul imprisoned or shut up. There is nothing in this notion particularly pleasant; but the contrast of the inscription, *Here lies interred the soul of the licentiate*, with an ordinary epitaph, might naturally be expected to excite the laughter of a shallow-pated youngster, like the one supposed. We observe that Father Isla, though he makes no remark upon this error, has corrected it in his translation.

Llorente endeavors to substantiate his proposition, that the work is of Spanish extraction by another sort of internal evidence, which, as he thinks, fixes the date of its composition at a period anterior to that of Lesage, and somewhere about the middle of the seventeenth century. On this head, however, his reasoning does not appear to us to be quite satisfactory. The principal passages relied upon are those which allude to an existing war between Spain and Portugal. In one of them, Gil Blas speaking in the person of a fictitious character, which he had assumed for a particular purpose, mentions that his father was killed fifteen years before in a battle that took place on the frontiers of Portugal. This battle, according to Llorente, was fought in 1640, and the date thus given would be that of 1655. He believes that the author inserted the passage expressly, in order to determine the exact time when the novel was written; but this can hardly be admitted, unless it be first made out on other

grounds that it was in fact written at about this epoch, and not at the later one when Lesage lived. The passages in question indicate in form only the period when the action is supposed to take place, and have no direct tendency to fix that when the work was composed.

Count de Neufchâteau, on the other hand, attempts to establish by a similar mode of reasoning, the claims of Lesage; and as far as we can judge from the work of Llorente, the argument derived from this topic is almost the only one of any real force, which he is able to bring in aid of the natural presumption in favor of his client, resulting from his having published the work as his own. Neufchâteau cites a number of passages containing allusions to events that had occurred at Paris a short time only before the novel was published, which serve, as he thinks, to prove that it must have been written by an inhabitant of that city about the time when it appeared, and of course to refute the theory of Llorente. Thus, Roger de Rada is said to have listened to the recital of his father with the same attention which was given by the Prince of Ithaca to that of Ulysses; and at the close of the episode containing his adventures, Gil Blas says, that he sent back this new Telemachus to rejoin his Ulysses and Penelope. These passages are thought to suppose the previous publication of Fenelon's Telemachus. Again; the story of Valerio de Luna appears to be founded upon the adventure of the Chevalier de Villiers, who committed suicide at Paris, in the year 1671, for the love of his grandmother, Ninon de l'Enclos. The anecdote of the two physicians, *Andros* and *Oquetos*, evidently alludes to a dispute which had occurred between the two French doctors, Andry and Hecquet, whose names are slightly disguised under these Greek appellations. They even quote, in the course of their controversy, a work published by Hecquet, under the title, *Le Larcin de la*

*Médecine.* These and several other passages of a similar kind, corroborate the *primâ facie* evidence in favor of the claims of Lesage ; nor do we conceive that Llorente has succeeded in the attempt which he has made, as respects most of them, to controvert the reality of the allusion. The true answer is, that these passages, though entitled to attention as arguments in favor of Lesage, cannot be regarded as decisive against a considerable mass of direct evidence to the contrary, because their introduction is easily reconciled with the theory of a Spanish original. A man of talent, and a fine writer, in dressing up a foreign work which he intended to publish as his own, would naturally modify the form of it, and insert a good deal of original matter. An occasional allusion to late publications, or events that had really occurred at Paris, would be an easy method of removing for the moment any suspicion of fraud. Such allusions no doubt strengthen, in some degree, the natural presumption resulting from the mere fact of publication ; but as they can easily be accounted for on the supposition that the work is of Spanish extraction, they cannot be considered as refuting the positive arguments which establish the latter supposition, and which cannot be reconciled with the contrary one.

This evidence, as far as we have hitherto considered it, results directly from the substance of the work ; but if the book be in fact a translation from the Spanish, it would be natural to expect to find in the form, that is, in the style and language, some distinct and undoubted traces of the primitive dialect. A writer of taste and talent, no doubt, has it in his power to give to a translation something of the idiomatical and easy manner of an original composition ; but in a work of this extent, it would be next to impossible to keep up such a manner uniformly from one end to the other, or even to avoid the fre-

quent recurrence of a foreign phraseology. In this important particular, the fact corresponds with the expectations which result from the theory in question. The work, though written in a style in other respects remarkably pure as well as correct and easy, presents throughout a mixture of Spanish idioms, and even pure Spanish words and phrases, which it would be difficult to account for on any other supposition, but which coincide with and strongly confirm the one maintained by Llorente. We shall cite some of these *Hispanicisms*, which constitute the most palpable, and perhaps the most decisive proof, that the work is a translation from the Spanish.

The one which from its nature occurs the most frequently, and to which we have already alluded, is the constant use of *Seigneur*, as the common style of personal address, instead of *Monsieur*, which would have been naturally employed by an original French writer. *Seigneur* is a French word of very limited application, much more so than the corresponding one of *Lord* in English, though not quite so much so as the English form of the same word, *Signior*, which, we believe, is now never used, except as a title for the Grand Turk. Under the old French régime, *Seigneur* was the style of the feudal proprietors who held of the crown, and this system of tenures being now abolished, the word is hardly used at all. The corresponding term of address, *Monseigneur*, was appropriated to princes of the blood royal, bishops, peers (who were only ten or twelve in number, under the old constitution), and a few others of the highest political dignitaries. To have spoken of a *Seigneur cloth merchant*, a *Seigneur innkeeper*, a *Seigneur Gil Blas*, and finally, a *Seigneur Scipio*, his lacquey, would have been received as intentional burlesque. In Spanish, on the contrary, the word *Señor* corresponds with the French *Monsieur*, and the English *Master*, and is even more extensively

used, being universally employed as a term of address between persons of all classes, from the king to the footman. This is precisely the manner in which the French *Seigneur* is used in *Gil Blas*. Thus this worthy character upon his first sally out of Oviedo encounters a sturdy beggar, who takes aim at him with his musket, and at the same time solicits alms, with the polite address of *Seigneur passant*. The natural phrase in French would be *Monsieur le voyageur*; but *Seigneur passant*, *My Lord passenger*, as an address to a poor little student mounted on a sorry mule, could hardly have crept into a well written French work, except by accident. It is easily accounted for by supposing it to correspond with the Spanish phrase *Señor pasajero*, which is idiomatical and natural. In the same way, the parasite with whom *Gil Blas* fell in at the tavern at Peñasflor, addresses him with the title of *Seigneur écolier*, and the latter returns it with *Seigneur cavalier*. The word *cavalier* has no other meaning in French, excepting that of a man on horseback, and as used here, is evidently a false translation of the Spanish *caballero*. *Seigneur écolier*, *My Lord Student*, is a style which in France or England would have been too gross for even the unexperienced stomach of *Gil Blas*. Father Isla seems to have thought, that *Señor estudiante* would hardly answer even in Spanish, and has substituted the more respectable character of *Licenciado*.

Independently of Spanish idioms, there is a great deal of pure Spanish interspersed through the novel, which can hardly have got there honestly. Thus *Gil Blas* describes the goldsmith, Salero, his intended father in law, as *un bon bourgeois, qui était, comme nous disons, poli* HASTA PORFIAR. *Il me presenta la SEÑORA EUGENIA, sa femme, et la jeune GABRIELA, sa fille*. Here are two pure Spanish phrases in three lines, not to mention the proper name *Gabriela*, which Lesage, had he been writing from his

own head, would have probably frenchified into *Gabrielle*, a very common name in his country. Again; the barber, Diego de la Fuente, in giving an account of his learning the guitar, remarks, that he had *pour maître de cet instrument un vieux SEÑOR ESCUDERO à qui je faisais la barbe*. The immediate motive for leaving this phrase in the original language, was perhaps the difficulty of rendering correctly the term *escudero*, in the sense here intended, which is that of a sort of upper servant, personally attending on a lady of quality. There is no corresponding term in French, or any other modern language, because this class of domestics was never known in any other country. It has long since gone out of use in Spain; and the frequent allusion to it in Gil Blas, is one pretty strong proof of the early composition of the work. The word *page* does not give the idea, because a page was always a youth, while the *escudero* was regularly an elderly person of a staid and respectable exterior. In some other passages, Lesage has used the French form of the same word, *écuyer*, as in the opening of the first chapter, where he states that the parents of Gil Blas went into service, his mother as a chambermaid, and his father as an *écuyer*. But *écuyer*, when applied to servants, means exclusively a *groom*, and conveys a wholly different notion from the Spanish *escudero* in this acceptation of it. Perceiving this, and having no French word that really represented the meaning, it was natural enough for Lesage to leave it in the original, as he has done in this and some other instances. Once more; when Gil Blas at the height of his credit at court, finds himself unable to recollect the countenance of his playfellow, Bertrand Nutmeg (*Moscada*), the little grocer's boy of Oviedo, who had come up to Madrid to tell him of the state of his family, the other reminds him that they had often played together at the *gallina-ciega*, blindman's buff, literally the

*blind hen*. Lesage gives, in a note, the corresponding French term *Colin-Maillard*. If he had been writing originally, the natural course would have been to put the French term in the text, and the Spanish, (if mentioned at all) in the note. Finally (for we begin to think that we have said nearly as much upon the subject, as, in the language of the trade, *it will bear*), Gil Blas, when confined in the Alcázar at Segovia hears a fellow prisoner singing to his guitar the following Spanish verses, which appear to have been written by the author of the novel, as they are not known to exist any where else, and which a foreigner could hardly have produced, and would not probably have attempted ;

'¡ Ay de mí ! un año felice  
Parece un soplo ligero ;  
Pero sin dicha un instante  
Es un siglo de tormento.'

We shall notice one other passage, not alluded to by either of the authors before us, which does not come precisely under the head of mistranslation, but which proves, perhaps as strongly as any one we have cited, the reality of a Spanish original of the work. The Asturian poet, Fabricius, in relating his adventures to Gil Blas, dwells particularly upon the false taste in poetry introduced by Gongora. The same subject is touched upon in several other places, and, considered merely as a topic of discussion, is one which we should much more naturally expect to meet with in the works of a Spanish, than of a French writer. In this passage, Lesage not only treats the matter very fully, in the way of observation, but undertakes to give in French an example of this affected manner of writing and speaking Spanish. A good writer, he remarks, would say, *tout uniment*, *Les intermèdes* EMBELLISSENT *une comédie* ; et nous, nous disons plus joliment, *Les inter-*



*mèdes FONT BEAUTÉ dans une comédie. Remarque bien ce FONT BEAUTÉ; en sens-tu tout le brillant, toute la délicatesse, tout le mignon?* Without insisting on the complete failure of this attempt to give an idea of the style of Góngora, it is quite evident that a Frenchman, writing originally, would not think of illustrating by examples in his own language, the verbal niceties of a foreign one. It requires the supposition of a Spanish original of the work, and of a rather hasty preparation of this part of the translation, to account for such a passage as the above, which, in our view, is nearly sufficient of itself to establish the proposition maintained by Llorente.

We are, therefore, inclined to consider it as, on the whole, nearly certain that Gil Blas is a translation from the Spanish; and as no such work had been printed in Spain before the time of Lesage, he must have made it, of course, from an unpublished Spanish manuscript, of which he had in some way obtained possession. In preparing it for the press, he may probably have changed its form a good deal, and perhaps added or subtracted passages of more or less importance. The work consists, as our readers are aware, of a principal narrative, which forms the basis of it, and of a number of episodes, composing about a third part of the matter. It is not improbable that some of these episodes may have been inserted by Lesage. One or two of them are made up of materials previously existing in printed Spanish books. Thus the story of Aurora de Guzman is no other than the fable of a well known play by Moreto, entitled, *Todo es enredos Amor, ó el Diablo son las Mujeres*; 'All's fair in Love, or the Women are the Devil.' The adventures of the little barber's boy, Diego de la Fuente, are borrowed, with great improvements, from an old Spanish novel, called, *An account of the Life of the Escudero Marcos de Obregon*, who is introduced by name in Lesage's narrative. It is

worthy of remark that no credit is given even for this open plagiarism. The apologue of the two travelling students and the soul of the licentiate Pedro Garcias, alluded to above, is also borrowed, with alterations, from the preface to the same work. In the old version, the inscription consists of the Latin phrase, *Conditur unio*, repeated; and the sagacious student, on lifting up the stone, finds a valuable pearl. The anecdote is vastly improved, as it stands in the French; but, for the reason stated above, it is probable that the improvement was made by the writer of the Spanish manuscript, as the new inscription was not fully understood, or correctly given, by Lesage himself. But whether the French editor did or did not add any or all of the episodes, is a secondary question; the main point being to determine the origin of the leading narrative which constitutes the substantial part of the novel. If we admit, on the grounds detailed above, that this was translated by Lesage from an unpublished manuscript, the further question will then arise, how so remarkable and valuable a manuscript should have come into his hands, and whether there are any traces in France or Spain of its having existed. On these points Llorente has a theory, which, though not quite so satisfactory as the first, is still ingenious, and, we think, on the whole, probable; and of which, at the risk of being tedious, we shall add a brief outline.

The novel of Gil Blas was published by Lesage in three distinct portions, at several times; the first two volumes, in 1715; the third, in 1720; and the fourth and last, in 1735. In the year 1738, he published the novel entitled the *Bachelor of Salamanca*, which he stated, in the title page, to be *taken from an unpublished Spanish manuscript*. This manuscript, of which the existence is thus avowed, is the one which Llorente supposes to have been, in its primitive state, the original Gil Blas. His

theory is, that it contained in the first instance the substance of both these novels; that Lesage wrought up the materials gradually into the four volumes that appeared, under the title of *Gil Blas*, as his own composition; and finally, published the last portion as an avowed translation. By this management, he expected to secure the credit of the authorship of the work, and remove the suspicions of such as knew of his possessing a manuscript of this kind. He is supposed to have obtained it through the agency of the Abbé Jules de Lyonne, son of the Marquis de Lyonne, ambassador extraordinary of Louis the Fourteenth at the court of Madrid, and afterwards secretary of state under the same king. The Marquis was a person of literary taste and accomplishments, and collected while at Madrid an extensive and valuable Spanish library, which included a number of manuscripts. The library, on the death of the Marquis, came into possession of his son, the Abbé Jules, who was an intimate friend of Lesage. He allowed the latter the free use of his books during his life, and on his death, which happened in 1721, bequeathed to him the aforesaid manuscripts. The collection itself now forms a part of the royal library at Paris. Such are the facts stated by Llorente, and as they are of a nature to be publicly known, they may probably be received as certain. They show satisfactorily enough how Lesage might have acquired a manuscript similar to the one supposed, and the existence of which, he in fact avows. It has sometimes been said, by way of accounting for the intimate acquaintance with Spanish literature and manners displayed in his works, that he had been for several years attached to the French embassy at Madrid; but this statement seems to be an error, founded on a confused notion of his connexion with the Lyonne family. The Marquis went to Spain as ambassador in the year

1650, twelve years before Lesage was born; and it appears from the dates of his books, which succeeded each other, with short intermissions, from 1695 till his death, that he could not at any period of his life have been absent for any length of time from France.

These facts serve to show how Lesage obtained his Spanish manuscripts. The probability of the identity of the Bachelor of Salamanca and Gil Blas is established by Llorente on the following grounds. The general plan is the same. They both consist of a series of adventures occurring to a hero taken from the lower walks of life, and interspersed with episodical narratives. The time of the action is precisely the same in both. The hero rises in each from a rather humble condition to that of confidential secretary to the prime minister. Gil Blas fills this station during the ministry of the Duke of Lerma, is involved in his disgrace, and recovers his former post under the long reign of Olivares. The Bachelor, on the other hand, figures at court precisely during the short period of the ministry of the Duke of Useda, son and successor of the Duke of Lerma, which intervened between those of his father and Olivares. The style of the two works is very similar; and although the Bachelor, taken as a whole, is decidedly inferior in effect to Gil Blas, the parts of it which on this theory are supposed to belong to the original manuscript, such as the adventures of Doña Francisca and those of the Bachelor in New Spain, are more powerful than the rest, and approach most nearly in merit to the other work. On the other hand, the parts of the Bachelor, in which, on this theory, the adventures of the original hero are brought out a second time, with variations, are comparatively feeble, but still bear a singular resemblance, even in the language, to the corresponding passages in Gil Blas. Thus, to give a single instance of this analogy, Gil Blas is maintained when a

boy by a rich but avaricious uncle, who is a canon at Oviedo, and the Bachelor is, in like manner, supported by a rich and avaricious relation, who is a doctor of the University of Salamanca. At the same period in the lives of their respective *protégés*, both these persons become fatigued with the trouble and expense of educating them, and send them out into the world to seek their fortunes, addressing them on the occasion in language substantially and almost literally the same. This, and several other correspondences of a similar kind, afford something like decisive proof in favor of the theory. We incline, on the whole, to admit it as probable, since such correspondence can hardly be reconciled with any other; but the evidence is not so complete as that which establishes the main proposition. On this system, Lesage, after publishing the leading narrative, including most of the principal incidents, wrote over again the early part of the same narrative, in an abridged and altered form, for the purpose of bringing out two or three of the more important adventures that he had reserved. There are some positive, though not insurmountable difficulties in the way of this theory, which we have not room to consider.

Not content with proving that the work is a translation from the Spanish, and even indicating the precise manuscript from which it was borrowed, Llorente goes further, and undertakes to determine with certainty the name of the original author. He enumerates thirty-eight persons, who lived at Madrid about the middle of the seventeenth century, when he supposes the novel to have been written; and after weighing the probabilities in favor of each, finally fixes on Don Antonio de Solis, a writer of considerable eminence in his day, and known to the public by his *History of the Conquest of Mexico*. There is little or no direct evidence, internal or external, in support of

this supposition ; but considered as a mere conjecture, it is certainly plausible. There are several circumstances in the history and character of Antonio de Solis which are likely to have concurred in the author of Gil Blas, and which could hardly be expected to meet in two several persons living at the same time. Solis was a dramatic poet of great repute. He is declared by Nicolas Antonio to be quite equal, if not superior, to the very best that preceded him, including Calderon and Lope de Vega. He was also versed in historical inquiries, as appears from his published writings ; and he wrote in prose with great ease and elegance. The events of his own life are similar to those which form the ground-work of the latter part of Gil Blas. He was secretary to the Count de Oropesa, in his successive vice-royalties of Navarre and Valencia, and was afterwards appointed one of the under secretaries (*oficiales*) in the department of state in the ministry of Don Luis de Haro, successor to Olivares. If we suppose, what is pretty clear from internal evidence, that the last volumes of Gil Blas shadow out the personal adventures of the author, it will follow that he must have occupied at the time when Antonio de Solis was in the department of state, some post of the same description. He must also, like Solis, have been an elegant prose writer, well versed in polite literature, and familiar with history ; and as he has laid in the kingdom of Valencia the scene of a part of the incidents supposed to have happened to himself, it is probable that he had also resided in that part of Spain.

It is easy to imagine why Solis, if he were in fact the author, should not wish to publish at Madrid a novel, which describes, in a very free manner, the secret history of the court for thirty years immediately preceding, while Philip the Fourth, who figures in the work, and to whom he was under great obligations, was still on the throne.

Just at this time the Marquis de Lyonne was sent ambassador to Spain, by Louis the Fourteenth. Being a person of literary taste and accomplishments, he would naturally form an acquaintance with an eminent writer employed in the department with which he transacted business, and might easily be supposed to have obtained from Solis a communication of the manuscript, and to have taken a copy or purchased the original. There is, therefore, a remarkable chain of presumptive evidence in support of this supposition; but as it is not sustained by any direct proof, it can only be received as a plausible conjecture. The unhesitating manner in which the worthy Inquisitor affirms it as a positive fact, seems to argue a rather imperfect notion of the nature and comparative weight of the different sorts of evidence. The exact degree of probability belonging to this theory, might be estimated by calculating on the usual mathematical principles the chances, that all the circumstances that have just been set forth should concur in two different persons. We have not room to work out the problem, and recommend it to the attention of that ingenious portion of the public, who are in the habit of solving questions for the magazines and newspapers. We are inclined to believe, that a correct process would give a result of at least a hundred to one in favor of Don Antonio.

We must here close our remarks upon the authorship of this novel, having already protracted them to a much greater length than we originally intended. It was our purpose to add a few suggestions upon the character and merit of the work; but we have no space left, and they would also be nearly superfluous. No production of its class is more universally known, or more highly valued by good judges, as a faithful, spirited, and finished picture of real life, than *Gil Blas*. These qualities give it a

substantial moral and literary value, independent of the passing fashions and capricious taste that prevail temporarily from age to age. It is one of some half a dozen books of the same kind, that have survived the general wreck of the libraries of romance, which were published in Europe during the last century; and having stood this dangerous ordeal it may now be considered as forming a part of the standard and classical literature of the modern world. It will probably be read a thousand years hence with as much interest as it is now; and the present article, should it appear to elucidate in any degree the question we have been considering, may be perused at that time perhaps with as much satisfaction, as if it contained an essay on the merits of the woollen bill, or a new theory in political economy.



## LIFE OF BERNARDIN DE ST PIERRE.\*

[North American Review, July, 1821.]

THIS is the first collection that has appeared of the writings of Bernardin de St Pierre. The *Studies of Nature*, comprehending *Paul and Virginia* and the *Indian Cottage*, was the only considerable book published by the author during his life. The present collection contains another work in three volumes octavo, entitled the *Harmonies of Nature*, which was left unfinished, and might perhaps as well have remained unpublished. It is in substance nothing more than a repetition of the same ideas that are developed in a better form in the *Studies*. It serves with several other posthumous pieces to swell the number of volumes, and perhaps the booksellers' profits, without adding any thing to the author's reputation, which rests ultimately upon *Paul and Virginia*. The few pages that compose this charming little pastoral were the principal achievement and are the only lasting memorial of a life of more than seventy years. At the head of the collection is placed a copious biographical notice of the author by Mr Aimé Martin, a professor in one of the colleges at Paris; and it is from this that we propose to draw the materials for the present article. The account is pretty well written, and from the great variety of singular adventures related in it, is as interest-

\* *Oeuvres Complètes de Jacques Henri Bernardin de St. Pierre mises en ordre, et précédées de la vie de l'auteur par L. Aimé Martin. 12 vols. Evo. Paris, 1818—1820.*

ing as a romance. As we anticipate that it will require a good deal of room to recapitulate the principal of them even in the most compressed form, we shall proceed at once to the narrative without further preliminary observations.

Bernardin de St Pierre was born at Havre, on the 19th of January, 1737. The occupations and events of his childhood and early youth are related in great detail, but we must pass over this part of his life almost without notice, in order to be able to give his subsequent history with sufficient minuteness. Suffice it to say that previously to the age of five and twenty he had studied with a curate and then at a college of Jesuits at Caen; had made a voyage to Martinique with his uncle — obtained a lieutenancy in the engineer corps, and in that capacity had served a campaign in Germany and another in Malta — but with so little success and with such a variety of cross accidents interrupting all his plans, that he returned to Paris from the last expedition without resources or credit, thrown out of the line of military advancement — and almost without friends. Necessity, it is well known, is not the best letter of recommendation; and the author of *Paul and Virginia*, under these circumstances, was rather at a loss how to supply himself with daily bread. When the little cash he brought from Malta was exhausted, he applied to his acquaintance and friends for a fresh supply, but found them all short of money. In defect of money, some of them gave him advice, and recommended to a lieutenant of engineers to take the place of usher in a small school and teach little children their letters. He finally undertook to give lessons in mathematics to young men intended for the army; but no students applying, the plan was abandoned. The offers of service which he made to the government were treated with neglect, and he found the period approaching very fast when the

baker and the landlady, his only remaining protectors, would withdraw their countenance. The following passage describes his situation at this crisis, with rather more point than is common to the biographer, whose general manner borders too nearly upon a sickening affectation of sentiment.

‘He lodged in a hotel in the Rue des Maçons, and hastened to visit those who, before his departure had expressed an interest in him. The bailiff de Fronlay spoke to him of his own troubles, deploring the lot of great men who had lost their influence with ministers. M. de Mirabeau, the friend of man, was composing a great book on the happiness of the human race, which prevented him from paying attention to any single one of the number. M. de Bois, first clerk, received him with the airs of a minister; told him he must wait, that his case should be considered; that he was perpetually visited by suitors; and with speeches like these, waited upon him civilly to the door. The poor suitor consoled himself under the indignity, by the sight of a hundred persons waiting in the antichamber, to enjoy the felicity of seeing a first clerk.

‘All his visits were attended with the like success. Meantime the little money he had left disappeared, and he came to the resolution of asking aid of his relations. He was equally unsuccessful here. Some told him he deserved all he suffered; and others that he was a *poor creature*, and that his family could not ruin itself to gratify his whims. The most friendly gave him no answer. In this emergency one of his protectors offered him a place at a boarding school, to teach little children to read. Another proposed to him to give lessons in mathematics to young men destined for the corps of engineers. He accepted this proposal; but pupils were soon wanting, and this last resource failed. On this he addressed to the minister of the marine a memoir, in which he proposed to go alone in a boat, and make a survey of the whole coast of England. This curious memoir did not excite the least curiosity on the part of the government, nor receive any answer. In short, there was no species of mortification which he did not suffer. He had never before felt to

such a degree the bitterness of this lot. Misery had already begun to crush him : he had exhausted his credit with the baker, his landlady threatened to turn him out ; nor was there, in this complete desertion, a soul to whom he could look for relief.'

This was certainly a case of distress ; but distress is a word that loses its meaning when applied to a single man in the prime of life, tall and handsome, with the gaiety of a soldier and a Frenchman, not to mention the more doubtful advantages for making way in the world of superior talents and a good education. Distress to such a person is like a delicate situation to a great dramatic poet. It shows the triumph of his art. St Pierre, in want of bread at Paris, bethought himself of a plan which had engaged his attention at an earlier period, and which had for its object the foundation of an independent state on the shores of the lake of Aral in the centre of Asia. As nothing seemed to offer nearer home, he thought the moment favorable for carrying this plan into execution. This independent state was, however, to make its debut in the world under the protection of Russia, and it was expected that the necessary pecuniary disbursements would be readily made in this quarter, in consideration of the great advantages likely to accrue to the Russian commerce from such a settlement. Thus the material parts of the plan seemed to be attended with very little difficulty, could the projector only arrive at St Petersburg. *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte.* But in this case the first step happened to be a pretty long one, and the cost, though not very large for a well stocked purse, was apparently quite beyond the reach of a person whose ordinary resources were inadequate to the expenses of his board and lodging. Upon applying again to his friends he found, that with a view of getting rid of him, they were willing to make rather more sacri-

fices than they would to keep him alive at home. From various sources he collected a sufficient sum to pay his expenses to Amsterdam, and trusting in Providence for the means of continuing his journey after he should arrive there, he set off in the diligence for Brussels, intending to proceed by land to Lubeck and there embark for the metropolis of Russia. It ought to be added here that his family had supplied him with a certificate, rather doubtful in its character, that he was of noble extraction. In fact the family tradition reckoned among their ancestors the celebrated Eustache de St Pierre, so well known for his magnanimous conduct at the siege of Calais. To give his nobility, real or supposed, the proper *éclat*, he assumed the style and title of the Chevalier de St Pierre, and furnished himself with a suitable coat of arms from an engraver's shop.

Our adventurer having with difficulty reached Amsterdam, found himself reduced again to the chapter of expedients, — a situation which it would appear from the practice of some powerful empires, is attended with less embarrassment in public affairs than it generally is in private. Upon the strength of a slight shadow of acquaintance or relation, he resorted for aid to the editor of the French gazette. Luckily for him this person proved to be a man of sense and kindness — a sage not according to the degenerate fashion of modern times, but after the manner of the ancients, who, according to our biographer, talked less of wisdom than we do, but practised it more. Mustel, a Frenchman born in Normandy, after obtaining some success in the poetical line, had abandoned the muses and settled quietly at Amsterdam in the capacity we have mentioned. Free from ambition, and indifferent to the fates of the great personages whose actions he recorded, and whose good and ill fortune were equally profitable to him, he had spent

his life happily in the society of an excellent wife, and in a sort of epicurean retirement. Having now realized an independence, he was desirous in his old age of returning to his country to die. Mustel, a philosopher himself, was pleased with the philosophy of our travelling chevalier, and his sister-in-law was struck with his personal advantages. A proposal was made him to accept the hand of the sister and the conduct of the journal, the latter being worth about a thousand crowns a year. The offer no doubt was tempting to a man without a sol in his pocket; but could hardly be expected to succeed with the destined founder of a powerful nation on the shores of the Aral. It was accordingly refused. He obtained from Mustel a supply of money to pay his expenses as far as Lubec, and left him with some regret to pursue the chase of fortune. Twenty or thirty years after he had occasion to return to Amsterdam, and found to his surprise that nobody could tell him any thing of the philosophic journalist. He had probably returned to his country and his memory had already perished in the scene of his labors. It struck St Pierre as a strange contrast, that a man who for half a century had distributed renown twice a week to all the potentates and heroes in Europe, should not be remembered thirty years after within the limits of his own street.

On his arrival at Lubec the author of Paul and Virginia was visited by another attack of that fatal consumption of the purse, for the cure of which, as Falstaff justly observes, all the palliations that have been discovered are so wholly ineffectual. Here he borrowed two hundred francs from the commandant of the place, for whom he had a letter, and embarked for St Petersburg with a joyous company of artists, painters, poets, jugglers, and hair dressers, proceeding in all the glow of expectation and gaiety to that capital, in order to lend their aid in the

due celebration of the accession of the great Catherine, who had just mounted the throne. Their exaggerated hopes and baseless visions of success and fortune afforded our philosopher ample subjects of amusement and pity, as well as of conscious satisfaction at the superior importance and practicability of his own schemes. After a passage of a month they arrived at Cronstadt, and immediately proceeded in a boat to St Petersburg. The magnificent spectacle afforded by the entrance of the city from this quarter sustained their hopes, and the hospitality of the inhabitants seemed at first to be in unison with the splendor of the residence. Mr Thornton, a British merchant, inhabiting the noble street called the English Line, that borders the river at this place, came out gaily to meet them, and invited them to repose in his house until their friends could be informed of their arrival. One by one the friends arrived in their carriages and took them away, till at last our unfortunate chevalier was the only one left. Not to appear like a man at a loss, he took his leave with a good grace, and was directed by one of his fellow-passengers, whom he met in the street, to the only French inn in the city. He now found that the empress had gone to Moscow to be crowned, and was not to return for a considerable time, till when nothing could be done about the future republic. Meanwhile his whole stock of money consisted in the sum of six francs, remaining from the loan of the governor of Lubec—a poor fund this to supply the necessary resources for a campaign of several weeks against his persevering enemies, the landlady and the baker, who seemed to track his course with unrelenting steadiness, like the harpies in Virgil, from one quarter of the globe to another. He succeeded for some time in parrying their attacks, but found the contest growing every day more unequal, when he was at last relieved from his embarrassment by a lucky accident—or, as he

was rather fond of styling it himself in the religious spirit of the latter part of his life — by a favorable intervention of Providence. A gentleman clothed in a rich pelisse, who proved to be the secretary of the famous marshal Munnich, then governor of the city, accosted him one day at the door of a church, and, after a long conversation, offered to present him to the marshal. This ceremony was accordingly performed the next day, at the rather early hour of three in the morning, when the marshal gave him audience. Munnich had just returned, at the age of eighty years, from an exile of forty in the wilds of Siberia. While he had amused his leisure in teaching mathematics to the soldiers that guarded him, he had learned philosophy himself from the accidents of his own life, and knew how to value it in others. He perceived the merit of St Pierre, and determined to be of service to him. His first offer was a bag of rubles for his immediate necessities, but this the chevalier refused; observing, with a proper spirit, that 'the engineers of the king of France could not accept money from any body below a sovereign.' The marshal was not displeased with this delicacy, and offered in the next place to present him to a general officer, who was going on immediately to Moscow, and would be glad of his company. The proposal was gratefully accepted. A Genevan jeweller, whose acquaintance he had made at his inn, supplied him with money for his immediate wants, which he would not accept from a marshal of the empire, and in a very few days he was on his way to Moscow.

This journey was not without its *desagrémens*, as indeed what passage of human life is? The general with whom our adventurer travelled was rather surly in his deportment, the weather was excessively cold, and while the rest of the company were shut up in two warm close carriages, the lines had fallen to St Pierre in an open trai-



nean, a situation the more disagreeable from his having no pelisse or fur cap. The advance toward Moscow had nearly proved as disastrous to him as the retreat from it lately did to his countrymen. When they stopped to repose, the entertainment was not well calculated to restore his spirits. The general at every post-house distributed to each of the company a small piece of bread as hard as a rock, and the value of half a glass of wine hewn off with an axe from a solid mass of that liquor. Having made this liberal allowance he placed himself at a table to take his own repast, while his companions were expected to remain standing behind his chair. This was a reach of degradation too low to be endured by the future legislator of Tartary. *Non tulit hanc speciem furiata mente Coræbus.* St Pierre alone of the company took the liberty of sitting in the general's presence, but whether at the same table is not sufficiently explained. The general, however, we are told, never forgave him this excess of familiarity. A ride from St Petersburg to Moscow in the winter is not a very uncommon adventure, and to an engineer of the king of France one would suppose not a very formidable one. Under the pen of his sentimental biographer, it assumes however rather a hazardous aspect, as the reader may judge from the following passage, which is a happy specimen of the biographer's best manner.

'But the aspect of nature was enough to plunge him in melancholy. It is impossible to describe the keenness of the atmosphere and the severity of the frost. Every thing was covered with snow—the woods, the fields, the plains, the mountains, the lakes, and even the sea. In the morning the sun rose like a ball of red fire in the horizon; its light was pale and without warmth, and served only to agitate in the air a multitude of frozen particles glistening like diamond sands. The night presented a spectacle not less strange. The pines, across which the icy

wind passed, were like so many pyramids of alabaster, with passages running into a boundless distance. Now the moon illumined them with bluish gleams, and anon the fires of aurora borealis seemed to cover them with the flarings of a great conflagration. You would have thought them, at such a moment, the colonnades, the porticos of a city, in which the excited imagination beheld sphinxes, centaurs, and harpies, Thor and his mace, and all the phantoms of the heathen mythology.

‘Rapidly borne along on an open sledge, he beheld these imaginary beings flitting around him, and he could with difficulty refrain from believing in their reality. The three carriages drove on, in this condition, without any hope but that of arriving at some poor villages, of which nothing, however, announced the neighborhood, for the very cocks and dogs were stupified by the cold. They beheld, however, troops of wolves, who, pressed by hunger, followed the travellers as their prey. These terrible animals divided themselves into two packs, on the two sides of the road. Each was led by a chief, who sprang forward, preceded the carriages, and stopped from time to time to utter the most plaintive cries, to which the two packs responded at measured intervals. After this call, you would hear no more of them but the light sound of their feet tapping on the snow, a noise more ominous even than their shrieks. Alas! when our sad traveller, in the midst of these deserts, recalled to his mind the rich fields of France, her smiling vallies, her green hills covered with animals serviceable to man, where the soil is clothed with harvests, vineyards and rich orchards, where the song of the cock, the baying of the dog, and the silver peal of the rustic bell announce at every morning the return of day, oh, how did his heart not sink within him! how wretched did he not feel himself to wander so far from his country! It was thus, that exposed to the rigor of the frost without so much as a cloak to protect him, he could not but envy the wretched peasants, whom he found herded in the huts, but who at least could comfort each other in their misery. He envied even the horses that were harnessed to the carriage, for Providence, careful for them, had covered them with a long and warm hair, like a thick fleece; as it were to testify — as our traveller despondingly thought at the time — that

man alone was abandoned on the earth ; as if to testify as he devoutly thought twenty years after—that there is not a single being abandoned ; inasmuch as God gives to all, according to their need, that which they have not themselves the understanding to procure.<sup>3</sup>

Upon his return to St Petersburg some time after in summer over the same road, the face of nature was wholly changed and the inconveniences he encountered, though not inconsiderable, were of a different description. Such readers as like the effect of a contrast may perhaps be pleased with seeing the following passage in the present connexion.

‘ He could not do any thing more acceptable to M. de St Pierre, who was overjoyed at the thought of traversing, at his ease and in fine weather, a region, his former sufferings in which he had not forgotten. But it was his fate to experience on the same spot the extremes of heat and cold. Placed at the bottom of a carriage, without any other clothing than pantaloons of linen, the two travellers were obliged to keep constantly at their sides a block of ice, which was renewed as fast as it melted, and of which the water, mixed with sugar and lemon, was inadequate to appeasing their perpetual thirst. By night, they were pursued by clouds of mosquitoes, which vanished at sunrise. But then there were swarms of little flies, which came to infect the air, and which clung to their faces like grains of burning sand ; larger flies succeeded these till noon ; when armies of new flies, still larger, fell upon them from every side, and covered them with painful stings. One would have thought that, like Egypt of old, the country was given over to a plague of flies. Oppressed for want of sleep, tormented by the heat and by the insects, our travellers pursued, almost blind, that same road, where so lately, benumbed with cold, they had seen nothing but plains covered with snow, and heard only the howlings of the wolf. At this time, the roads were covered with droves of cattle, driven by Cossacks from the Ukraine to Dantzic. The two friends were never tired of admiring the gaiety of these

fellows, who, unconcerned at the heat of the sun, the stinging of the flies, or the enormous distance to be traversed, went singing on, in the shade of the pine trees.'

The close of this description may serve as a convenient specimen of our author's style and manner, in the original.

'Un jour au lever de l'aurore, les deux voyageurs côtoyaient à pied les rives d'un lac, en admirant la multitude de perspectives, qui s'ouvraient devant eux. Après une nuit étouffante, ils jouissaient avec délices de la double fraîcheur des eaux et du matin, lorsque les accents de plusieurs voix mélodieuses attirèrent leur attention. Ils marchèrent un instant, sans rien découvrir, mais soudain la vaste étendue du lac se déroulant à leurs yeux, à travers quelques sapins isolés, ils aperçurent plus de trois cent femmes entièrement nues, dont les eaux transparentes semblaient multiplier les charmes. Les unes nageaient en silence, les autres chantaient, mollement couchées sur le gazon. La plupart se poursuivaient en folâtrant, tandis que d'autres, laissant tomber leur dernière voile, étaient immobiles sur le rivage. Les anges eux-mêmes n'auraient pu voir sans émotion toutes ces beautés réunies. Leurs groupes pleins de grâces se dessinaient sur un horizon d'azur, et semblaient l'œuvre d'un enchantement. On eût dit une troupe de ces nymphes, que le Tasse met à l'entrée du palais d'Armide. Nos voyageurs contemplaient cette scène avec ravissement; mais ayant voulu s'approcher davantage, leur habit rouge les trahit, l'alarme se répandit parmi les baigneuses, et en un moment le tableau disparut. Les plus jeunes se plongèrent dans le lac, et les plus âgées, se couvrant le visage d'une main, de l'autre firent signe aux voyageurs de s'éloigner; quoique jeunes et officiers ils respectèrent cet ordre, et bientôt ils purent s'en féliciter, lorsqu'ils apprirent de leur conducteur, qu'il y aurait eu du danger à ne s'y pas soumettre.'

It has not been our fortune to travel from Petersburg to Moscow in the winter, and we are of course unable to speak from personal experience of the fidelity of the first

of these descriptions. We had occasion some years ago to make this journey in summer; and must add that this last described feature in the landscape had entirely disappeared. By way of compensation, perhaps, we may observe, that we do not recollect to have encountered a single fly or musquito on this long and solitary course, and although not provided with a block of ice in the carriage, we suffered very little from heat. The principal inconvenience which befel us arose from the quality of the road, which was then composed for the greater part of large unhewn logs placed contiguously to each other across the way, without any covering of earth. We had unwarily made trial of a carriage without springs, which is used a good deal by the people of the country, called a *kibitka*, and the effect upon the bones of driving over such a road in such a vehicle, is more easily imagined than described. It is time, however, to return to our adventurous knight, whom we left at the entrance of Moscow.

Upon the arrival of St Pierre at this place the adverse stars that had so long presided over his fortunes relented for a time. He was received with great cordiality by General du Bosquet, a Frenchman in the Russian service, to whom he had been particularly recommended by Marshal Munnich, and speedily obtained the rank of second lieutenant of engineers. This post seems at first blush a little below the pretensions of our Asiatic Solon, but the brilliancy of the dress afforded some compensation for the inferiority of the rank. It consisted, as we are told by the biographer with laudable exactness, of a scarlet coat with black facings, fawn colored under clothes, white silk stockings, an elegant *plumet* and a bright sword. Such equipments in addition to an athletic and graceful person and an advantageous *tournure* were a good ground for almost any pretensions at the court of

Catherine. With such qualifications it was far from being a visionary project to think of ruling a future Empire on the Caspian sea, since they were perhaps more likely than any others to give the possessor the effective command of one in actual existence and extending over half the globe. Such at least was the opinion of the Grand Master of Ordnance, Mr de Ville-bois, to whom St Pierre had been presented, and who cast his eye upon him as a suitable instrument for supplanting the favorite Orloff in the good graces of the empress — Orloff being then the principal obstacle at court to the credit of de Ville-bois. Not long after he accordingly proposed to his *protégé* to present him to the Empress. St Pierre could hardly contain his raptures, although they arose from views entirely opposite to those of the Grand Master. The moment, as he thought, was now at hand when the great object of his expedition was to receive its accomplishment. In direct contradiction to all the principles of court etiquette he thought of nothing less than handing a memoir to the empress upon his intended colony at the public audience, and in preparing for his presentation he was more busy in retouching his plan than in decorating his person. It may be observed that his protector, de Ville-bois, was not in the confidence of his political projects. The account of his presentation and of his subsequent interview with Count Orloff is rather long, but we think the reader will not find it tedious.

‘ M. de Ville-bois, delighted with the enthusiasm of his *protégé*, with whose brilliant schemes, however, he was unacquainted, determined to satisfy his wish, by presenting him to Catherine. A private motive seems, moreover, to have actuated him on this occasion, and every thing leads to the conclusion that he had formed the plan of destroying the influence of Orloff, by that of a new favorite, and thus acquiring an ascendancy over his sovereign. It was one evening, on rising from supper, that he an-

nounced to M. de St Pierre the good fortune which awaited him the next day. Our philosopher had well nigh gone crazy at the news. In haste to be ready, he escaped from the hall of M. de Ville-bois, ran and shut himself up in his chamber, began his memoir twenty times, read it, and read it again, declaimed it, opened his Plutarch, sought there for hints, for inspiration, and prepared a fine discourse on the glory of kings that found republics. The night was passed in the agitations and excitements of this fever. Toward morning he began to dress, stopping every moment to correct some line, alter an expression, or throw in an idea to ensure the success of his enterprise. But what was this enterprise, which carried him to the extremities of the earth? what were these seductive speculations, which, in the midst of the ices of the north could make him forget even his native land? Near the eastern shores of the Caspian sea, between India and the Russian empire, there exists, in the happiest climate, a favored region, where heaven has lavished all its gifts. The Tartars have occupied it, and turned it into a desert. It was here, that, under the modest title of *Company*, our young legislator proposed to found a republic. The empress of Russia, so enlightened in respect to her interests, would protect an establishment, which would bring into her possession the riches of India, and the commerce of the world. This commonwealth should be open to the unfortunate of all nations. To be poor and persecuted should be a sufficient title to enter this asylum. Even the Tartars would soften their manners, to be admitted into this retreat of misfortune. Good faith, liberty, justice and law alone should bear sway in the state: and the code of this new Atlantis should be expressed in terms clear and unequivocal. Like that of William Penn, it should say to all those who sorrow in the world, 'Come to our fertile region; and he that there plants a tree shall gather its fruit.' M. de St Pierre proposed, above all, to imitate this legislator in his reliance on God, the greatest, in our opinion, ever evinced by the founder of any state; inasmuch as he dared to establish a society of men, rich and without arms; and by a miracle of Providence this society never failed to flourish in the midst alike of savages and Europeans. Such were the noble projects, which the young

traveller came, with the firmest confidence, to present to the great Catherine, and rich with these brilliant illusions reached the gates of Moscow with his last crown.

'The hour of the audience at length arrives; the memoir is finished, he reads it once more, runs to M. de Ville-bois, mounts his carriage, and soon after finds himself in a magnificent gallery amidst the great lords of the court. They all affected the manners and politeness of the French. To judge from the air of freedom and happiness in their faces, you would have pronounced them a company of the blest. Each one exerted himself to appear what he was not, to say what he thought not, and to hear what he believed not. Not to deceive would have been the true deception here. There was a mutual fraud, which imposed on no one, and to which every one was reconciled. The eye was dazzled with ribbons, gold, silver and jewels. At the sight of this motley throng, M. de St Pierre lost at once his courage. He was amazed at his having conceived of bringing a project for liberty into such a circle of slaves. Can they understand the language of truth, whose only pleasure is falsehood? Can they wish to protect the free, who owe their titles and their riches to a yoke, which they bind upon their wretched serfs? Grieved, almost dismayed with these reflections, seized with a timidity which he could not throw off, he began to distrust his scheme, and would have yielded perhaps to the feelings which oppressed him, when the doors of the gallery were pompously thrown open. All in a moment was motionless and silent, and he saw only the empress. She advanced alone. Her countenance was noble, her expression mild and serious, her carriage easy, every thing about her combined to remove fear, and to inspire respect. She stopped to listen to the grand master. While he spoke, the eyes of Catherine fixed themselves upon our youthful legislator, who approached at a signal of M. de Ville-bois, and according to the usage, dropped with one knee to the floor, to kiss the hand which was extended to him by the empress. After this ceremony, she addressed him several questions about France. He was fortunate in his replies, and a charming smile announced to him that he might take courage. Finally she told him, with an air of great kindness, that she was pleased to have him in



her service, and that she begged him to learn the Russian ; afterwards saluting M. de Ville-bois, she threw upon his *protégé* the most gracious glances, and continued to proceed with the great lords who surrounded her. The rapidity of this scene had disconcerted the projects of M. de St Pierre. His discourse had stopped at his tongue's end, and his memorial remained in his pocket. He that had come but to speak the truth had been able to think of nothing but compliments. By what sorcery had he yielded so soon to the seductions of the court ? Why had he not been able to overcome a weakness of which he was ashamed ? Alas, he felt that his republic was vanishing away, and that in holding the language of the courtiers, he had enlisted in their number.

'After the empress had retired, the courtiers surrounded M. de Ville-bois, to congratulate him on the success of his young cousin, who soon became the object of general notice. He was overwhelmed with offers of service ; with compliments, protestations and flatteries. Even Count Orloff came to ask him to breakfast, and the baron de Breteuil, then French ambassador, scolded him familiarly for neglecting his countryman. Stupified and like a person intoxicated, our poor second lieutenant could not imagine what it was, which had rendered him so quickly an important personage. He approached Barasdine, who had been a witness of the scene at a distance, and seemed to share the triumph. As soon as they were alone, Barasdine explained to him the zeal of a court, ever ready to bow down before the momentary idols of fortune. 'They think,' said he, 'that the grand master has cast his eyes on you, to shake the power of Orloff, and regain the favor to which he aspired. They add, that the empress, in retiring, praised your person, your self possession, and the vivacity of your answers. My uncle and several courtiers have commended you ; and Orloff turned pale at it. Trust me, and make yourself a rival of this unworthy favorite ; every purse will be opened to second you. Set up a carriage, take an hotel, a title and servants. Throw yourself at all hours in the way of the empress. She is young, handsome and kind ; you are a Frenchman, you are agreeable, nothing is impossible for you.'

‘Resolved not to depart a moment from the principles of honor, he went the next day to the Count Orloff with his memorial in his hand, and found him alone in his cabinet, engaged in reading some papers. His reception of M. de St Pierre was polite, but somewhat cold. His manner was marked with a curious mixture of familiarity, openness and pride. His fierce and masculine beauty would have worn a stern appearance, if you had not perceived in the softness of his air and the studied sweetness of his looks, that he had learned to wear the yoke, and for the sake of reigning had stooped to please. Tea was brought, and while at breakfast, they began a conversation on politics, literature and fortifications. Orloff expressed himself with clearness, and knew how to listen for information, a rare gift among men, who generally listen only to kill time, to forget, and to talk. Toward the end of breakfast, he took from his library the two first volumes of the Encyclopedia, of which the margin was covered with notes in French, on the most abstract sciences, in the handwriting of the empress. He opened these volumes, threw himself on his knees, covered them with kisses, fell into the most passionate enthusiasm, and spoke in the most glowing terms of the talents of his sovereign, of her accomplishments, her beauty, and the exalted fortune of those whom she loved. He then took from his secretary another book richly bound, and said to M. de St Pierre, “This does not contain much science, but you will see that it is not wholly useless.” He opened the volume, which contained nothing but bank-notes. “You must take some leaves of it,” said he, smiling, “it is the only way which you can criticise them as you ought;” adding in the kindest manner, “I know, by experience, that the equipment of an under lieutenant is very expensive and his appointments very trifling. You cannot therefore refuse to be obliged by an officer, who feels proud of having begun at the same point as you.” M. de St Pierre was affected at this offer; he conceived it a noble and generous action. With greater knowledge of the world, he would perhaps have looked on it as designed to humiliate a rival flattered by the other courtiers. However this may be, the offer of Orloff met with no better success, than that of the marshal Munnich. To be the benefactor of M. de St Pierre it was nec-

essary from that time to be his friend or his king. But in rejecting the gift of Orloff with one hand, he presented him with the other the memorial which he had so much at heart. Orloff ran it over with indifference, threw it carelessly upon the table, and said that "views of this kind were contrary to the laws of the empire and the interests of the great." This objection did not discourage our legislator, who grew warm by the very opposition, and tried to convince Orloff, by showing him the beauty and utility of his project. The latter, however, listened with an absent air, and had already risen like a man whom truth does not please, when it was announced that the empress required his attendance. He immediately waited upon her in his slippers and morning gown, and left M. de St Pierre profoundly chagrined, and disposed to make a satire on all favorites. After waiting half an hour and finding that the count did not return, he determined to retire, cursing at once his own ambition and the blindness of the great in never desiring a real good. The most gloomy reflections pursued him to his miserable abode. He saw dissolved at a moment the enchantment of greatness, with which he had been dazzled; and he found himself now at his stove with his mathematical books, the study of which appeared to him equally useless and tedious, and with no other society than that of a *denneckik*, or military domestic, to which his rank entitled him. Even the sight of this man increased his dejection. He had been lately torn from his family; he remained for days motionless behind his master, doing like an automaton that which he was commanded by signal, and in stupid affliction resigned to every thing. Sometimes, however, the expression of sadness burst out all at once in a sort of song, or rather monotonous murmur, accompanied with tears. Besides, he had so little idea even of the most common things, that by way of cleaning shoes, he would plunge them in water, and leave them there till they were called for to be put on. M. de St Pierre having taught him how to brush a coat, the invention of the brush seemed to him a thing so marvellous, that he was about to throw himself at his master's feet and adore him as a superior intelligence. The constant presence of this demi-savage was the more afflictive to our hermit, as it would not allow him to

forget for a moment, that there, whither he had come to seek fortune and glory, he had found only bondage and misery.'

Such was the untimely fate of one of the most promising and best administered republics that ever existed in the land of Utopia. It does not appear that St Pierre made any efforts to accomplish this scheme during the remainder of his residence in Russia, which lasted three or four years. It strikes us as rather probable that the extraordinary and romantic coloring given by his imagination to the circumstances of his interview with the empress, and communicated by him to the biographer, was illusory. It is far more likely that M. de Ville-bois, perceiving that he had a strong desire to be presented to the empress, was induced by the personal esteem he felt for him, and without any ulterior views of his own, to gratify him in this wish, although beyond the pretensions of his rank; and there is nothing unnatural in the other incidents that followed. However this may be, the destined founder of republics sunk very quietly into the sphere of his second lieutenancy, from which he gradually rose to the rank of captain; and had he chosen to remain in this career would probably have attained to the highest posts in the army, and might perhaps have played the part of Kutusoff in the late campaigns, at about the same age. Fortunately for the admirers of Paul and Virginia, his destiny was differently cast. His character at this period of life was too impatient and restless to be long satisfied in any situation, however promising and even brilliant. A wish to abandon the Russian service had been for some time fermenting in his mind, and upon the disgrace of his protector, M. de Ville-bois, it assumed to his imagination the appearance of a magnanimous sacrifice to friendship and duty. Some efforts were made by the government to induce him to stay; and General du

Bosquet renewed the tempting proposition, that had been held out to him in Holland by the journalist Mustel, in a still more specious form. Few captains of engineers at the present day would resist the offer of the heart and hand of a general's niece,

'—— beautiful as sweet,  
And young as beautiful, and soft as young,'

accompanied by the reversion of a princely fortune. Our knight errant would doubtless have perceived the advantages of negotiating upon this basis, and have concluded the treaty at once. Unfortunately the empress Catharine having a cast off favorite to whom she was willing to do a kindness, bethought herself about this time of placing him upon the throne of Poland. The Polish nobility felt themselves aggrieved and were disposed at first to make some resistance; and although the French government, then in the hands of Madame de Pompadour, was not very efficient, it was understood to be the policy of France to support them. Under these circumstances it became of course the duty of every loyal Frenchman, especially of every officer of engineers, and most of all, of such whose proper vocation was to found and regulate republics and empires, to help the Poles in resisting the appointment of Poniatofsky to the crown. Our chevalier, uniting all these qualifications, could not hesitate a moment. Turning accordingly a deaf ear to the offer of the general's fortune, and an eye of indifference to the charms of his niece, he set off with all speed for Warsaw, provided with proper recommendations from the French ambassador. Upon his arrival he was received with due distinction and cordiality by the chiefs of the party he came to serve, and in order to lose no time in perfecting the objects of his undertaking, he made great haste to join the army of Prince Radzivil. Had he succeeded in

this attempt, there is reason to suppose that he would have covered himself with glory by his exploits during the campaign, and it is not improbable that the arm of so valiant a knight would have turned the scale of battle and secured the independence of Poland. Such achievements are far from being unknown in the annals of romance. Still the world would have lost Paul and Virginia. It is, therefore, not wholly to be regretted that the very day he left Warsaw on his way to the army of Radzivil, he was taken prisoner by a detachment of the Russians who covered the whole country; and found some difficulty in escaping with his life upon giving his *parole* not to serve against the empress. Thus ended the second of our hero's political enterprises, and thus disappeared the last gleam of hope for the brave and high-minded Poles.

Not having for the moment upon his hands any republic to found or protect, our adventurer naturally remained a while at Warsaw to compose himself after his late agitations; and here was seen in its full evidence, the truth of the homely proverb bearing, that if a man cannot find work for himself, a personage we shall not name will soon find it for him. Prince Radzivil had a relation, the princess Mary M——, as our biographer writes her name, with laudable discretion. She had used her interest in favor of St Pierre at the time of his imprisonment. To make repeated visits of acknowledgments to a fair protector was the dictate of natural gratitude. To become enamoured of a princess endowed with every charm of mind and person was the necessary result, with so loving a heart as that of the author of Paul and Virginia; and by this concatenation of cause and effect, we behold our adventurous Paladin in the next stage of his progress a captive, like so many of his compeers of romance, in the toils of beauty, as indifferent to all his high designs, and

as much intoxicated with the delicious poison of love, as Holgar the Dane in the Paradise of the Fairy Morgana, Rinaldo in the enchanted groves of Armida, or the pious Æneas in the African palace of Queen Dido. There was this further resemblance between his fortunes and that of the last mentioned personage, that they both commenced by an adventure of precisely the same description. St Pierre, like the Trojan hero, was accidentally overtaken by a storm in company with the object of his passion, and they were led into error by repairing for refuge to the same pavilion. The want of room makes it impossible for us to enter into all the details that are given upon this subject by our sentimental, though at the same time, highly religious and moral biographer. Suffice it to say, that after the inglorious delusion had detained our chevalier for more than a year, those tiresome personages, so constantly hostile to every thing like passion and romance, the *parens*, the relations and friends of the princess interfered and the knight received his dismissal. He wandered about for some time in a state bordering very nearly upon despair, and invoked death as the only possible means of relief. But it has been observed, that the trials of the heart, though admitted by all to be in the highest degree painful, are seldom absolutely fatal. It is believed that the case of Werther is the only well authenticated example of such a catastrophe. Our hero after a while began to take courage, consulted with his friends, and was advised to repair to Vienna and endeavor to obtain employment in the Austrian service.

This application was wholly unsuccessful, and principally, we think, from our hero's fault. He was recommended by the Austrian ambassador at Warsaw, Count de Mercy, to a baroness, one of his relations at Vienna, and it was by her interest that his claim was to be advanced. We are compelled to say, that in his treatment

of this person M. de St Pierre appears to have transgressed all the rules of civility. It is true that the baroness had kept him waiting seven or eight days, before she admitted him to an interview, and that upon making her acquaintance he found that she was old and ugly. But this was really not her fault, and he ought to have recollected that all the women in the world could not be expected to exhibit the airs and graces of the divine princess Mary M. Instead of this he seems to have taken serious umbrage, and to have seized the first occasion for expressing it. The baroness happened to observe that she had formerly known at the French court a Marchioness de St Pierre, and that she was perhaps the mother or aunt of the chevalier; upon which the latter replied, with what his biographer calls a 'noble frankness,' 'that he should not have come to Vienna to offer his service, if he had belonged to the family of the Marquis de St Pierre; but that he would not abuse the kindness of the baroness, and that she might reserve her protection for those who stood in need of patronage and high birth to obtain success.' The baroness, says our biographer, did not understand irony; he might have said she did not like insolence. The conversation naturally stopped at this point, and with it the chevalier's expectation of preferment in Austria. Meanwhile, he had received a letter from the princess Mary M——, filled with tender protestations and expressions of despair at their separation, which he chose to construe into an invitation to return. It happened that the state carriages, intended to be used at the coronation of king Stanislaus, had been built at Vienna and were just going off. Our hero prevailed upon the conductor to allow him a passage in one of them, and was very soon at Warsaw. It strikes us as a sacrifice of principle in one who had so nobly resisted the pretensions of Ponia-tofsky to make use of his carriage; but love has led many



a wiser man than St Pierre into much greater follies, so that we shall pass over this point without further censure. What was his astonishment upon arriving at Warsaw to find that his disconsolate princess was to give that very night a magnificent ball to the foreign ministers. In the paroxysm of his rage he burst without invitation into the middle of the *fête*, and taking the princess aside overwhelmed her with the bitterest reproaches. The next morning early he received the following laconic *billet-doux* :

‘Your passions are so furious, that I can no longer support them ; it is time for you to become reasonable, and to think of your profession and your duty. I am going to join my mother in the Palatinate of \*\*\*\*. I shall not return hither till I know you are gone, and shall not write to you till I know you are in France.

‘MARY M——.’

Such was the *dénouement* of this romantic business. After another interval of despair our adventurer took courage a second time, and set off for Dresden in the intention of offering his services to the Elector of Saxony, who was just then making war upon Poland. He was well received at this place, and his adventures here were not less extraordinary than at Warsaw. They are related by the biographer with a relish, which shews very clearly that the *Savans* of Paris know how to unite the national gallantry with the graver cares and tastes of their proper functions. We shall not, however, by any extract, diminish the edification which our readers might experience from reading the account of them in their place, and simply observe that their abrupt and unsatisfactory termination disgusted St Pierre with Saxony, where in other respects, his prospects appear to have been sufficiently brilliant ; and he departed somewhat in dudgeon, with the intention of obtaining employment in the army of the great Frederic. The reader will have observed

that our adventurer shared, in a degree, the philosophic indifference of the worthy Dugald Dalgetty, and was as ready, in a good cause and with the law on his side, to draw his weapon for one monarch as for another. At Berlin, however, he met with a repulse, the regulations in regard to the rank of foreign officers entering the service, not being compatible with his pretensions. The only adventure of much interest that occurred in Prussia, was a repetition by the counsellor of state, Taubenheim, of the seducing proposition of the journalist, Mustel, and General du Bosquet. Taubenheim placed at his disposal his eldest daughter, Virginia, a charming girl of fifteen, the prototype of the future heroine of romance, with a handsome fortune, acquired in the thrifty employment of farming the government monopoly of tobacco. This attractive offer created a serious struggle in our adventurer's mind; but his high destiny of founding empires, finally prevailed over the seduction of a vulgar and unambitious happiness; and once more we add, that the world is all the better for it, for if St Pierre had espoused the real Virginia we should probably have lost the imaginary one. Having now completed his tour through the north of Europe, our hero returned to France, in precisely the same situation in which he left it; and resumed immediately the agreeable occupation of soliciting patronage and employment. As it happened, a scheme was in agitation, which precisely fell in with his professional pursuits. The government were meditating the project of founding a colony on the great island of Madagascar, and as our hero was known to work in this line, he was immediately invited to concur. This proposal was accepted of course. The command of the expedition was given to a person of higher rank, and St Pierre had the second place, with the title of captain of engineers at the Isle of France. He sold his little patrimony, and

expended the proceeds in buying all the books upon legislation, that have appeared since the time of Plato. Meanwhile, the leader of the new colony in making his preparations, engaged neither soldiers nor workmen, but contented himself with laying in a large stock of servants, cooks, actresses, and secretaries. They had not been long at sea when the secret came out. The commander informed St Pierre, that he had not the slightest intention of founding a colony; that his only object was to make his fortune, by trading in the natives of Madagascar, and that in selecting the persons who composed his suite, he had consulted of course, only his own personal amusement. This then was the object for which St Pierre had sacrificed his paternal property, in making a complete collection of Utopias. It may easily be imagined, that he took the earliest opportunity of quitting the concern. Without proceeding to Madagascar he landed at the Isle of France, and after remaining there two years, returned for the last time to his native country; and for the last time we add, that however unpleasant this turn of occurrences may have been, it was still in the end productive of benefit, since we could not have had, at least in its present shape, the agreeable pastoral that has given St Pierre his reputation, unless the author had been led by cross accidents to pass a considerable time at the Isle of France.

This was the conclusion of the active enterprises of St Pierre. The rest of his life was employed in the everyday work of writing and publishing books, and furnishes, of course, but few materials for the biographer. He formed, soon after his return, the plan of a voluminous romance, in prose, to be called *Arcadia*, in which was to be recorded, for the benefit of future legislators and knights errant, all the magnificent projects, which the writer had attempted in vain to execute. After laboring many years in collecting materials for this work, he abandoned the

plan; and although he afterwards regretted that he had done so, we are inclined to think that it was fortunate for his reputation. He worked up the materials prepared for the *Arcadia* in the several books which he afterwards published, and we should be very sorry to exchange them for a heavy prose epic poem. The first book of the *Arcadia* was finished and printed, and gives but a poor idea of what the work would have been. The manner is nearly that of the *Martyrs*, by M. de Chateaubriand, and the impression made by it about as dull. The *Studies of Nature*, *Paul and Virginia*, and the *Indian Cottage*, were formed out of the materials intended for this romance, and published one after the other with great success; and the author immediately took his station among the most distinguished literary characters of the time. It would be needless to add any critical remarks upon books so well known. The reception, which *Paul and Virginia* met with from a company of distinguished and enlightened auditors at a reading in manuscript, is matter of curious observation.

‘Nevertheless a few days after, madame Necker wrote to the author to request him to read his works. She promised him for auditors and judges the persons whom she esteemed the most. M. Necker, as a distinguished favor, would be at home on the occasion. In a word, Thomas, Buffon, the Abbé Galiani, M. et madame Germany, and some others were admitted to this tribunal, where M. de St Pierre appeared, with the manuscript of *Paul and Virginia* in his hand. He was at first heard in silence; by degrees the attention grew languid; they began to whisper, to gape, and listened no longer. M. de Buffon looked at his watch, and called for his horses. Those near the door slipped out; Thomas went to sleep; M. Necker laughed to see the ladies weep; and the ladies, ashamed of their tears, did not dare to confess that they had been interested. The reading being finished, nothing was praised. Madame Necker alone criticised the conversation of Paul and the old man. This *moral* appeared

to her tedious and common-place ; it broke the action, chilled the reader, and was a sort of *glass of iced water*. M. de St Pierre retired in a state of indescribable depression. He regarded what had passed as his sentence of death. The effect of his work on an audience like that to which he had read it, left him no hope for the future. He did not know that an unknown author must look to the public alone for success. In society, those who have themselves acquired a reputation are slow to praise, for fear of committing themselves ; the rest judge of a book only from the name of its author. He remained therefore fully persuaded that Paul and Virginia—that the *Studies of Nature*—that all the works, to which he had devoted fourteen years of patience and observation, were unworthy of the public eye.

‘ He was still suffering under this double ill fortune, when a man of genius, the painter Vernet, came to revive his courage, and to restore him to his favorite studies. This celebrated artist often made a visit to the little garret which M. de St Pierre then occupied in the Rue St Etienne-du-mont. Accident having carried him thither a few days after the disastrous scene at M. Necker’s, he found his friend in the lowest stage of depression ; and the poor hermit, his heart filled with the disappointment, was not slow in relating it to his friend. Vernet was surprised ; for he had read several passages of the *Studies*, and was anxious himself to judge of a work from the same pen. M. de St. Pierre yielded to his urgency with reluctance ; but at last he took his manuscript, which since the fatal day had remained rolled up on the corner of his table, and began to read Paul and Virginia. Vernet listened at first with distrust ; but the charm began to act upon him, and at every page he made an exclamation of delight. Never had he heard any thing so novel, so chaste, so affecting. The description of those distant regions opened his eyes to a new nature. The gardens of Eden were not more fresh. The loves of Adam and Eve have not more grace and innocence. It is the pencil of Virgil ; it is the moral of Plato !—Soon he ceased to praise, he wept. He shares the emotions of Paul at the departure of Virginia ; and he wants words any longer to express the feelings awakened in him. They reach the dialogue of the old man, and M. de St Pierre proposed

to omit it, mentioning the effect which it had produced on madame Necker. Vernet, however, would not consent to omit any thing; he yielded it all his attention, and his silence soon became more eloquent than his tears or his praises. At last the book was finished. Vernet, transported, arose and embraced his friend; and, pressing him to his breast, cried "happy genius, charming creature, the beauty of your character is transfused into your work. You have produced a *chef d'œuvre*. Take good heed not to retrench the dialogue of the old man; it introduces a distance of time and place into the poem, separates the details of the infancy from the tale of the catastrophe, and gives an air of perspective to the picture. It was inspiration to introduce it. How charming too for its natural beauty is this distant region! and how ingeniously the action is combined with the character of the landscape! One not only seems to have lived with these sweet children, but to hear the chirping of their birds, to cultivate their garden, enjoy the beauties of their sky, and wander throughout the scenes they inhabited. My friend, you are a great painter, and I dare promise you a splendid reputation."

The Indian Cottage has not the romantic interest of Paul and Virginia, and is less valued by that part of the community who confine their studies entirely to such works as explain the development and effects of the tender passion. It is perhaps more pleasing to a different class of readers, from the very agreeable and satisfactory manner in which it treats some of the highest questions in philosophy. The discussion proceeds in the way of apology, after the manner of the ancients. In this popular shape the author handles the great problems, where we are to search for truth, that is, for correct notions on the objects of life and the means of effecting them? Having satisfied ourselves, shall we communicate the result of our researches to others? What are the best instruments for prosecuting the inquiry? The answers to the first and third questions are sufficiently plausible. We are more

likely to ascertain the truth by independent examination of facts, than by implicit deference to authority, and sincerity is the only necessary instrument for carrying on this examination. But shall we communicate the result to others, at the risk of shocking all the prejudices and interests that may be connected with opposite opinions? The answer to this question is not quite so rational. St Pierre recommends that we should tell the truth to those who are well disposed to receive it, that is in substance, to those who knew it before: but conceal it from the interested and the vicious. He appears to found himself upon the passage in scripture—'Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.' But the moral couched under this brief parable may perhaps be understood to recommend caution and prudence in the publication of unpopular truths, rather than the entire concealment of them, or the revealing of them to those only who knew them before, which appears to be a work of supererogation. The concluding apophthegm of the Indian Cottage serves as a general moral to the work, and has met with universal approbation, *a man is never happy without a good wife.*

In this respect St Pierre may be looked upon as singularly fortunate. At every period of his life he succeeded in conciliating the favor of the sex. We have seen already that, without being subjected to the tedious process of courtship and the repeated preliminary refusals that usually occur in these cases, he had in his youth several opportunities of contracting an advantageous marriage. Where such occasions are neglected, it is not always that they return at a later period, but with St Pierre they continued to present themselves to the last. In a passage of his *Studies of Nature* he expressed a strong desire to obtain a suitable companion for life. He received in consequence a number of letters from different

ladies making proposals for the situation; one in particular, from Lausanne, the writer of which described herself as young, rich, and handsome. Unfortunately, she was a protestant and could not bring herself to marry a catholic. Her pretensions in other respects were sufficiently moderate. *I wish my husband*, she observed in her letter, *to love me exclusively and forever. He must believe in God, and must serve him in my way. I would not be your wife*, she adds, *unless we could go to heaven in company.* St Pierre replied, that in order to enter upon the marriage state, with a fair prospect of so desirable a result, it was necessary that the parties should see and know each other first. The young lady attempted to continue the negotiation, through the medium of one of her female friends at Paris. The latter does not appear, however, to have been a very accomplished diplomatist. Thinking to carry her point, as Hudibras with the widow, by force of logic; she undertook to employ the *argumentum ad hominem* and quoted a passage from the Studies of Nature, in which it is observed, that the birds sing their hymns to the great Creator in various notes, but all equally agreeable. A practised reasoner, like St Pierre, could not fail to remind her that this passage was fatal to her own argument; that if all religions were equally agreeable to the Creator, there could be no motive for his conversion, and that he never meant to be understood as saying that a nightingale ought to change his note and sing like a thrush. Some years after he married mademoiselle Didot, the daughter of the celebrated printer, and their two children were named Paul and Virginia. After her death he espoused in second nuptials a very young lady of noble family, mademoiselle de Pelleporc, who survived him and is still living. His old age seems to have been as quiet and happy as his youth was restless and miserable. His tranquillity was but little affected by the revolution. He



declined all active political employments, and when requested by Bonaparte to write a work upon the wars in Italy, he positively refused, in consequence of which his name was erased from the list of senators. This was not the sacrifice of a mere title, as the place of senator was attended by a handsome pension. He died in January 1814, at the advanced age of seventy-seven.

A strong sentiment of religion was a prevailing feature in the intellectual habits of St Pierre during the latter part of his life; and the independence, with which he expressed it on all occasions, gave occasion to a very strange scene at a meeting of the institute.

‘Here begins one of the most scandalous scenes of the revolution. Why can we not here stop? why have we entered this fatal career without calculating what it would cost us to complete it? But the choice of keeping silence is not left us; and even if we could tear this page from our work, we could not efface its contents from our history.

‘It was in the year 1798, that Bernardin de St Pierre had been charged by the class of morals to make a report upon the memoirs which had been written on the prize-question, What institutions are the most proper to form the basis of public morals? All the writers had treated the subject according to the well known opinions of their judges. Dismayed at a perversity which he could not but believe affected, the author of the *Studies* was anxious to bring men back to views more just and consolatory, and he finished his report by one of those flights of inspiration in which his soul breathed out all the sweetness of the gospel. On the appointed day, he repairs to the institute to submit his report. The greater part of his colleagues were gathered round a minister, who kept in pay a band of mercenary scholars, directed to retrench from the Latin poets all that regarded the divinity, that they might be rendered fit manuals for the revolutionary schools. It was in presence of such an auditory, that M. de St Pierre began to read his report. The analysis of the memoirs was heard with sufficient attention, but at the first annun-

ciation of his religious principles, a cry of fury was heard from all parts of the hall. Some jested, asking him when he had seen God, and what was his form; others derided his credulity; the most moderate addressed him with expressions of contempt. From ridicule they proceeded to outrage; they insulted his age, they charged him with dotage and superstition; threatened to expel him from an assembly of which he had made himself unworthy; and there were some, who carried the madness so far, as to challenge him to a duel, in order to prove, at the point of the sword, that there was no God. He vainly attempted to make himself heard in the tumult; they would not hear him, and the *ideologist* Cabanis, the only one we shall name, in a transport of rage, cried out, "I swear there is no God, and I demand that his name never again be pronounced within these walls." Bernardin de St Pierre would hear no more. He ceased to defend his report, and turning to this last opponent, said to him calmly, "your master Mirabeau would have blushed at the words you have uttered." Saying this, he retired without waiting for a reply, and the assembly continued to debate, not if there were a God, but if they would allow his name to be heard in their halls.

'Meantime M. de St Pierre had entered the library. Dismayed at a scene without a parallel in the history of human societies, he felt that he ought to make a last effort, and hastened to commit to paper a few ideas, which should touch the minds of his auditors. This memoir was the work of inspiration; there are but a few words erased in the draft of it before us, and it was never copied. It is an affecting compound of sweetness and strength, and a model of the most lofty eloquence. He prays, he consoles, he seeks to reconcile — this was his only reply to the insults with which he had been loaded. He would not wrong himself by trying to *prove* that there was a God. He disdained to appeal to the works of nature; they would not be comprehended by men corrupted by the vices of society. But he sought to make them blush, by recalling to them the ephemeral laws of this period. He opposed to the deliberate Atheism of his colleagues the involuntary assent of the representatives of the people, men covered with crimes, who yet dared not deny the God, whose vengeance awaited them. He carried this terrible

argument so far, as to invoke that name, which no being can pronounce without a shudder—Robespierre—whose auspices the class of morals was claiming. Thus spake the just! And God granted that these lines, inspired by the love of man, should be superior to any thing that the author, who had produced so many eloquent works, had hitherto written, that posterity might behold in his finest page the record of his noblest action.'

St Pierre attaches great importance himself to certain theories of his own in natural philosophy, particularly one, which refers the movement of the tides to the dissolution of ice at the poles. This object occupied his mind more and more as he advanced in life; but his views on the subject have not been sanctioned by the approbation of good judges, and it would be superfluous, even if we had room, to discuss them here. His business after all was more with the *optic naiads*, to borrow an expression from the friend of Gray, than with the nymphs of the ocean. The tides, whose principles of motion he had studied with success, were those, which swell the heart and gush from the eye.

## LIFE AND WRITINGS OF SCHILLER.\*

[North American Review, April, 1823.]

THERE are few works in the English language more interesting than Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*; and in general a well written account of a great poet is nearly as delightful to read as his works. Good poetry is so rare and exquisite a product of the mind, that the few favored mortals, who are capable of affording it, have been in all ages and nations (as is well observed by the celebrated writer just mentioned) invested by public opinion with some of the attributes we commonly connect with the notion of divinity; and the accounts of their lives and writings have been always studied with an interest resembling that, with which we read the history of the incarnation and miracles of superior beings. Good biography, as it is nearly as agreeable, is also perhaps quite as rare, as good poetry; and many a bard, after bestowing immortality upon crowds of patriots and heroes, has fallen short of his own fame with after ages, for want of a life. As the glory of the brave perishes, unless embalmed with the 'tears immortal' of some divine poet; so the memory of the poet himself, who 'saved others' names, but left his own unsung,' if it is not seasonably

\* *Friedrich von Schiller's Leben, aus theils gedruckten, theils ungedruckten Nachrichten, nebst gedrängter Uebersicht seiner poetischen Werke. Herausgegeben von Heinrich Doering.*—*The Life of Frederic von Schiller; compiled in part from materials before unpublished; with a concise review of his poems. By Henry Doering.* Weimar, 1822.

bottled up in spirit by some careful biographer, fades and dies away; and finally two or three thousand years after, there comes along a great German critic, and flatly denies in the face of his works, that any such person ever existed. Hence we have always looked upon it as a singular dispensation of Providence in favor of the fraternity of the British poets, that a writer, so well qualified in almost every respect as Dr Johnson, should have been raised up and strengthened to undertake the task of doing them justice *en masse*; securing them all from forgetfulness, and displaying them together, like a fine collection of pictures adorned with the golden framing of his own rich and sonorous prose, for the lasting admiration and delight of posterity. If bards and biographers, as may well be presumed, associate together in the flowery fields of Elysium, where we are told all good writers are admitted, it is easy to conceive that the shade of the learned Doctor must enjoy—to use a diplomatic phrase—the most distinguished consideration with the whole company of British poets, whose lives he has recorded. Unfortunately, few biographers can be advantageously compared with this great writer; and we regret to say, that the author now under review is far from forming an exception to this remark. It must be allowed, however, that his work, if it has no great merit, is nevertheless respectable in its way, makes but slight pretensions, has few glaring faults, and especially is brief, the best possible quality in an indifferent book. It consists of a plain recital of the principal facts in the life of Schiller, accompanied with critical remarks on his poems; the latter division of the work being rather inferior in value to the former. As the facts mentioned in the narrative are not perhaps very generally known to the public, we shall offer, in the present article, a summary of the most important, inter-

persed with such observations as may be supplied by Mr Doering, or naturally suggested by the subject.

Frederic Schiller was born at Marbach, a little town in Würtemberg, on the tenth of November 1759. His father, John Caspar, was bred a surgeon, and served in that capacity with a regiment of Bavarian hussars in the war of the Austrian succession. At the close of this war he returned to Würtemberg, and was there placed as adjutant and ensign in the Prince Louis regiment. With these characters he made the campaigns of the seven years' war, relieving at times the sufferings of his comrades by surgical aid, and occasionally supplying their spiritual wants by a sermon or a psalm. He seems indeed to have been a person of versatile, if not pre-eminent genius. After the peace of 1763, he retired from the army with the rank of captain, and was employed by the duke of Würtemberg to superintend one of his estates. In this charge he acquitted himself with great success; and he even acquired such skill in agriculture, that he afterwards published a book upon the subject, which obtained the honors of a second edition. The mother of Schiller was the daughter of a baker of Kodweis, and is represented as a person of a kind and affectionate character, and of some poetical taste.

Schiller was not remarked at school as a promising boy. His genius seems to have been first excited by the opportunity of frequenting the theatre, which presented itself to him when he was about eight years old, and he then made some attempts at poetry, and began already to plan tragedies. He continued, however, several years longer at the public school of Ludwigsburg, employed in classical and scientific studies, but without obtaining much distinction in either. His inclination at this period of life was for the profession of divinity, and the wishes

of his parents coincided in this respect with his own. It happened, however, that the duke of Würtemberg was instituting at this time a military school at Stuttgard; and having heard a good account of young Schiller, had made up his mind to place him there as a student. His parents objected, that it was not a suitable school for theological studies; but the duke replied, that he could easily adopt a different profession, and the parents thought it prudent to conform to his wishes. Accordingly, the future poet was admitted at the age of fourteen into this institution, where probably every thing was taught except theology, as Schiller had decided for the profession of law.

The studies connected with this profession soon became odious to him, and he determined to abandon it and apply to medicine. In reality, the passion for poetry had already taken complete possession of his mind, and any employment that did not tend to gratify it appeared tasteless and irksome. About the time that he entered the school, he wrote an epic poem, entitled *Moses*, and a tragedy upon the history of *Cosmo de' Medici*. These immature productions were inspired by the popularity of Klopstock and Lessing. The smaller pieces that he wrote at this period gave, we are told, but slight indications of his future merit. Meantime, he employed his leisure in literary studies. He was induced, by hearing a passage quoted from Shakspeare in a public lecture, to attempt the reading of him; but he took very little pleasure in it, his taste not being sufficiently mature to enjoy the sublime and beautiful display of true nature exhibited in the works of our great dramatist. At a riper age, he had learned to read him with different feelings, and his remarks upon the subject, in a letter written at that time, are somewhat curious:

'When early in life I first became acquainted with Shakspeare,' he observes, 'I was repelled by the want of sentiment, which permitted him to introduce passages of low mirth in scenes of the deepest tenderness; to degrade the most pathetic parts of Hamlet, King Lear, and Macbeth, by bringing in clowns and grave-diggers; to dilate with apparent pleasure on offensive subjects, and then to hurry on relentlessly where the heart would delight to have had him dwell. I had studied and respected him in short for many years, before I began to read him with a true relish. I was not capable at that time of enjoying nature at the first hand.'

In these remarks Schiller has certainly pointed out a real defect in the manner of Shakspeare; but it is doubtful whether he has given the true reason, why he did not at first take pleasure in reading him. We apprehend in fact, that it is the merit, and not the faults, whatever they may be, of Shakspeare, which makes his writings less agreeable to an immature taste, than many others of far inferior value. The taste of childhood is indifferent to real beauty; and when a sensible mind first catches a glimpse of the action of life, it is dazzled and bewildered with a thousand illusions, and wholly unable to estimate with certainty the value of appearances in art or nature. To a lad of fifteen a stage-player is a greater hero than Washington, or even Bonaparte; Amadis de Gaul a much more interesting work than Don Quixote; and the Arabian Tales the highest effort of the human understanding. The mass of mankind, whose real life lies without the sphere of elevated thoughts and actions, and who have no time to study, never correct their false notions, nor acquire just ones. If they assemble in crowds to see a representation of Cato, it is not from a love of noble sentiment, expressed in lofty language; but they go, as Pope says, to see the 'bag-wig, flowered gown, and elbow-chair.' As the influence of the world has unfortunately a natural



tendency to chill the heart, as well as to inform the mind, a great proportion of the smaller number of persons, whose habits and studies are of a higher description, lose in feeling what they gain in judgment. Hence arises the rarity of the power of producing fine imitations of nature, and of valuing them when produced by others, or, in other words, of genius and taste, which are only different operations of the same agents, and which demand the union of experience and sensibility.

The genius of Schiller soon reached the highest point of vigor, if not of maturity, that it ever attained. The *Robbers*, the most powerful, if not the best of his productions, was written at about the age of eighteen, while he was still at the academy in Stuttgart. He had occasion at this time to compose a professional essay on the connexion between our physical and intellectual natures, and he published in an appendix some passages from the *Robbers*, then unfinished, as translations from a pretended English play, designed to illustrate the work. In 1781 the tragedy was first published; and the next year, was represented with great success at the theatre in Mannheim. It became immediately, and still continues one of the most attractive theatrical exhibitions, that are presented to the German public. Imitations of it in the French and English languages have met with no great success, being made indeed by inferior hands. As the publication of this tragedy was the most important event in the life of Schiller, it may not be foreign to our purpose to add a few remarks upon its character, with a view of ascertaining its principal merits and defects.

The value of the *Robbers* lies almost wholly in the vigor and richness of the style. It is impossible not to recognize in it the work of a most powerful mind pouring out its inspirations with the careless prodigality of conscious wealth. The characters are well drawn, admitting

the justice of the conception, and produce a strong effect. The language is nervous and energetic, sometimes perhaps beyond the limit of good taste; but even in its faults of this sort we perceive at once the excess of real force, and not the counterfeit vigor of ambitious weakness. The extraordinary length of the tragedy, which is nevertheless fresh and overflowing with matter in every scene, evinces the richness of the author's resources. The manner has also the merit of entire originality. There is no painful effort to appropriate the beauties of former writers. Except the mere form of being written in dialogue, and divided into acts, the work has no resemblance whatever to any that went before it. Conscious of his power, the author disdained to be indebted to his predecessors, and drew fearlessly from the abundance of his own wealth. This is the true sign of real genius, and the *Robbers*, with all its faults, must be acknowledged by every correct judge as a work of this description.

The great defect of this play, on the other hand, is that the principal character is a conception wholly false and unnatural. The hero is a person endowed with the noblest qualities of mind and heart. He is susceptible and indeed actually under the influence of the most refined and delicate affections. To represent such a person, as hurried on by passion into the commission of some high crime, would be natural enough; but instead of this, he is described as living for a series of years in the constant practice of highway robbery and murder. Few judicious persons would probably hesitate to pronounce such a character impossible in nature, and as much the fiction of a wild imagination, as the ogre with an elephant's head, in the *Arabian Nights*, or the beautiful sea-maid with a fish's tail; for whose ugly counterfeit, our thrifty townsman, Capt. Edes, lately paid so dear at Batavia. If supposed to be possible, it is still a

possible monster. To represent such a being as acting a part with ordinary men and women in the business of life, is an error of the same sort, as if an artist, in a picture of the battle of Waterloo, should place the duke of Wellington or Bonaparte astride upon a centaur. The poet of the Pleasures of Hope tells us indeed to

learn how generous worth sublimes  
The robber Moor, and pleads for all his crimes.

But this passage only shows how easily a youthful mind lends itself to any fiction that appears in a plausible dress; and such a heresy, though very excusable in a bard who had not then passed his teens, has not, we trust, been encouraged by this distinguished author, in the maturer judgments of his lectures. How far 'generous worth' would 'sublime' the practice of highway robbery, if they could be supposed to exist together, is a question which we need not discuss; as we know that the gentlemen, who exercise this profession, are unacquainted with any worth but that of a full purse, or any generosity but that of emptying it in low debauchery, as soon as possible. We shall not, of course, be understood to mean that a mixture of virtue and vice, in the same character, is unnatural. We only affirm that the virtues and vices, that are combined in fiction, should be such as consort with each other in real life. To represent the most contradictory moral qualities as existing together, each in its extreme, is as much an act of mere wantonness, as it would be to describe an individual as laboring in the last stages of a loathsome disease, and exhibiting at the same time all the outward forms and color of perfect health.

A fault of this description in a work of art, considered merely as such, is no otherwise injurious than as it diminishes or destroys the effect of the piece, and tends at the same time to corrupt the taste of the public. But

works of art have also a powerful moral influence; and in this point of view, the consequences of exhibiting false and unnatural images, in an attractive dress, are extremely important. Moral rules are generalizations of the relations established by nature between individual beings; and virtue consists in the regulation of our conduct, agreeably to these relations. We have also a capacity of deriving pleasure from the contemplation of these relations and the objects between which they exist; and good taste consists in possessing this faculty uncorrupted and in a high degree. Hence virtue may be described as good taste in action; and every work of art, that sins against the rules of taste, saps at the same time, in proportion to the power with which it is executed, the foundations of good conduct. Some errors of this kind are more injurious than others, and the most extravagant are the least dangerous, because the least likely to impose upon the feelings. The attempt in the play we are considering, to dress up highway robbery in the garb of heroism and sentiment, seems in the abstract too absurd to produce any practical mischief. But unfortunately there is no fiction that does not assume an appearance of plausibility under the pen of a great poet; and we are told, that soon after the first publication of the Robbers, a number of respectable young men in Germany, were carried away by the example of the hero to such an extent, that they actually embraced his profession. Supposing this fact (which however has been repeatedly stated) to be doubtful, it is certain that in reading the play we sympathize with the Robber's sufferings instead of laughing at the absurdity of his character; and we have seen above, the sweetest and purest poet of the day pronounce the personage to be sublime. Indeed the combination of qualities, which forms the basis of the character of Moor, is so far from offending the public taste by its incongruousness, that it

not only met with astonishing success in the hands of Schiller, but has been produced again, with equal effect in our own time, by Lord Byron. His *Giacours*, *Alps*, and *Conrads*, are all heroic and sentimental highwaymen, a little less monstrous than Charles Moor, because the scene of their exploits is laid in less civilized countries. Such delineations are dangerous and immoral, not precisely from the probability that they will bring many persons to the state prison or the gallows, but because they confound all our notions and feelings in regard to moral distinctions, vitiate the fine natural sense of real worth and beauty, and lay the heart open without a guard to such temptations as most easily beset it. There are, however, as we have intimated above, errors in taste of a similar kind, that are more pernicious, because they are less extravagant. But it is time to return from these general views to the subject immediately before us.

The *Robbers* was commenced, as we have observed above, while Schiller was a pupil at the military school; but before it was published he had been appointed surgeon to a regiment in the duke of Würtemberg's service. The director of the theatre at Manheim, having made arrangements for bringing out his play, the author, as may easily be supposed, was anxious to assist at the representation, and applied for leave of absence from his regiment for that purpose. This favor was refused; but the poet's zeal was not so easily damped. He went off privately to Manheim without permission, assisted with great delight at the representation of his play, and as soon as he returned, was put under arrest for a fortnight. Not long after, the duke positively prohibited him from writing any thing except upon medical subjects. It is stated by the biographer, that his highness, who probably considered himself the best judge of poetry in his dominions, had previously sent for Schiller for the purpose of pointing out

to him in a fatherly way the faults in his tragedy, and directed him not to publish any thing in future without shewing it to him, and taking his advice. The bard's hesitation in agreeing to this proposal is supposed to have been the immediate cause of the prohibition just mentioned. The restraints that were imposed upon him by the duties of his station and the meddling interference of the duke soon became intolerable to Schiller, and he determined to quit the service and the country. He did not venture however, to apply for permission to resign his place in a regular way, thinking probably, that it would not only be refused, but that means would be taken to prevent him from executing his intentions. For fear of this, he determined upon a bolder step, and took his departure privately without leave. This proceeding, which in technical language amounted to *desertion*, might have been productive of serious consequences. It appears, however, that the government made no attempt to recover the fugitive; and when Schiller, several years afterwards, at the height of his reputation, ventured to return for a short time to Würtemberg to see his family, the duke not only did not order him to be shot, as he probably might have done by the letter of the law, but graciously condescended to take no notice whatever of his presence in the country.

Upon leaving Würtemberg, Schiller took refuge under a feigned name at the house of a friend, where he continued his poetical labors, and employed himself in writing the tragedies of the Conspiracy of Fiesco and Cabal and Love. After living in this way about a year, he repaired to Mannheim, at the invitation of baron Dalberg, then and for many years afterwards director of the theatre at that place. Dalberg was a younger member of one of the wealthiest and most distinguished houses in Germany, which had lately derived an additional illustration from

the liberal sentiments and literary taste and talent of its principal branches. His brother, the head of the family, was at that time Elector of Mentz, and became afterwards, in the course of the late political revolutions, prince primate of the Confederation of the Rhine. Another brother distinguished himself as one of the high functionaries of the late French empire, under the title of duke of Dalberg, and is now a peer of France. The three brothers were all remarkable for their love of letters and literary men; and indeed had all adventured themselves with great success in the field of authorship. The elector published at a very early age a work, entitled *Reflections on the Universe*, which went through ten editions before the author was twenty-three years old. The baron's taste was for the drama, and he wrote himself several pieces for the theatre, which he directed. It was he who had assisted Schiller in bringing out the *Robbers*; and he now received its author at Mannheim with great regard and kindness. The two new tragedies were acted the next year with much success. During his residence at this place, which lasted about three years, he appears to have written but little, excepting a few small poems and a periodical work, entitled *Thalia*, which was published at long intervals. He was principally employed in studying the most distinguished dramatists of other countries, and in meditating plans for new books of his own. He also assisted baron Dalberg in the management of the theatre.

It will not be necessary for our present purpose to examine in detail the two tragedies just mentioned, or those which were afterwards published. We were led to notice more particularly the prominent merits and defects of the *Robbers*, because it forms in both these points a class by itself in the writings of its author; while the other tragedies are all marked by the same general characteristics, and form together a second class, entirely dissimilar in

all respects from the first. The two that are mentioned above, and which were written next after the *Robbers*, resemble it more nearly, than the subsequent productions, and show the transition, by which the poet gradually passed from one manner to another. *Don Carlos*, which followed *Cabal and Love*, exhibits the second manner as strongly as perhaps any other of the plays; and all that succeeded it are distinguished by the same general features. Having already attempted to give some idea of the *Robbers*, we shall here add a few remarks upon the style of plan and execution, which was adopted by Schiller in his riper productions.

The character of the *Robbers* was probably determined in a great degree by the circumstances of the author's position at the time when he wrote. It is the production of a powerful mind, still in an immature state, but excited to a high and unnatural degree by a sense of supposed injustice and oppression. The love of poetry and letters was the dominant feeling with Schiller; and this passion was thwarted by the discipline of the military school. The strictness of the rules, to which he was subject, however wholesome for general purposes, appeared to the youthful bard a relentless and stupid system of tyranny, because it prohibited him from attaching himself to pursuits, which he considered not only as perfectly honorable, but in the highest degree ennobling and generous. This situation accounts at once for the beauties and the faults of the author's first play. A sense of the injustice, under which he supposed himself to be laboring, vitiated his view of the general operation of society. His soul rose up in rebellion against all existing institutions. The world seemed to him like a vast prison house, where base and sordid spirits are clothed with power, and permitted to trample with impunity upon the rights of the wise and the good. The struggles between these parties



make up the action of life. Hence the highwayman, who comes out more fearlessly and publicly in opposition to the existing system, than any other person, is the boldest and most distinguished champion of the right side, and naturally presented himself to the poet's mind, as the proper hero of a play intended to depict this gloomy scene. The villain of the play as naturally took the form of the lord of the manor, a noble and wealthy proprietor, who is represented as exercising all manner of oppression, and as being hated and despised by every body; while his brother, the highwayman, whose habitual occupation is the burning of houses and the cutting of purses and throats, is described as worthy of universal love and admiration, and as suffering a sort of martyrdom in the best of causes.

With Schiller this view of society was probably a generalization of his own individual experience; and the poem which he has founded upon it is accordingly executed with all the force and fire of true feeling. These qualities constitute the merit of the work, and ensured its success. The reputation and general favor which the author obtained from it, contributed, in connexion with the natural progress of age and experience, to change his ideas, and to reconcile him with existing institutions. Flattered and caressed by the wealthy and the noble, he was soon satisfied, that merit of all kinds might be found in the highest ranks of society; and that the present system has its bright as well as its dark side. We find accordingly in the later plays few if any traces of the philosophical views that give a character to the Robbers. The poet generally confines himself to the exposition in a dramatic form of known historical facts, and chooses his heroes in the same rank of social life, which has generally been resorted to for this purpose by his predecessors. His change of circumstances appears also to have operated,

but in a less favorable way, upon the style of the later plays. In the Robbers the vigor and warmth of the language is perhaps excessive; in the others the fault is of a different kind. The style is pure and elegant, and even far from being positively languid; but, if we are not mistaken, it is somewhat less natural and nervous, than might be wished. These poems are rather dramatic dialogues than tragedies. They resemble in manner the English tragedians of the last century, much more nearly than Shakspeare.

In fact, though the names of Schiller and Shakspeare are often cited together, the two writers have hardly any points of resemblance. They belong to two different periods in the progress of poetry. Shakspeare has all the exuberant fulness, the fresh and joyous flow of thought and feeling, that appertain to an early literary age; and the fetters of general principles and conventional rules hang about him very loosely. At the slightest temptation he breaks through them with perfect *nonchalance*, and shakes them off, 'like dew-drops from a lion's mane.' Nay, he often, in the wantonness of power, seems to take delight in setting all forms at defiance, and bringing into one picture the most incongruous images in art and nature, as in the last act of Hamlet. In Schiller, on the contrary, we recognize the established empire of taste, against which genius itself in a polished age does not venture to rebel. The form predominates over the substance. There is no playing with conventional rules—no mixture of prose and verse, of tragedy and comedy in the same scene—no puns in the midst of pathos, or instructions to stage-players given by a tragic hero at the height of his distress. The execution is pure, chaste, and polished, and even in the Robbers only errs by a small excess in degree. Thus far all is well; but then we miss at the same time the fresh impression of

nature, and the careless ease and lightheartedness of an untamed fancy. The language is studied and elaborate, as well as elegant, and the effect upon the whole is much less delightful. Whether it be possible for any talent, however high, to produce the same impression of power, and the same degree of pleasure, with a strict observance of all the formal rules of taste, that result from witnessing the wild and graceful sports of a genius that rises above them, is perhaps a question. The talent of Schiller, great as it was, has certainly not been sufficient for this object.

The difference between these two poets is as great in the substance, as in the form of their works; and in this respect, also, each of them wears the stamp of the age in which he lived. Shakspeare gives us the simple and true impression of nature, as observed and felt by himself. In Schiller we generally get it at second hand, through the medium of books, and deduced from vague generalities. Shakspeare, too, is rich in the most profound and curious general observations upon every branch of moral science; but with him they seem to be instinctive conclusions of his own acute sense, while in Schiller, on the contrary, we trace them at once to be the common fund of the philosophical knowledge of his time; and are rather tempted to regard even his individual characters as personifications of acknowledged general truths. In making these remarks, we are far from wishing to undervalue the merit of Schiller, which is sufficiently attested by his prodigious and continued success. Indeed the general characteristics, which we have just noticed, belong to him in common with the most distinguished dramatic poets of ancient and modern times. The masters of the Greek and French tragedy are, like him, artificial and discursive, as well as pure and elegant. The manner of Alfieri and Metastasio partakes of the

same qualities; and the best English tragedies of the last century are feebler examples of this model. We are inclined to think, indeed, that Schiller has upon the whole brought this form of tragedy to a higher degree of perfection, than any modern writer, with the exception, perhaps, of Corneille and Racine. We only mean to insist, that his merits and defects are entirely different from those of Shakspeare, with whom he is frequently classed by superficial critics, who also describe them both as belonging to the *romantic* school of poetry. It is almost needless to remark, that there is not a writer in the whole compass of literature less romantic than Shakspeare; and it is rather difficult to conjecture for what reason he has been classed with Schiller, unless it be that they both neglect at pleasure the formal unities of time and place—a circumstance which, however unimportant, seems to be regarded by some critics as the real touchstone of merit and only true ground of distinctions among dramatic writers.

We are not made acquainted with the reasons that induced Schiller to leave Manheim, where he seems to have been pleasantly situated, and very much respected. He afterwards resided successively for short periods at Leipsic, Dresden, and some other places. His poetical reputation procured him every where a very favorable reception; and he had already become an object of curiosity to strangers; some of whom, however, were partially scandalized at the simplicity of his appearance and manners, having formed an idea that the author of the *Robbers* ought to figure, at the very least, in mustachios and hussar boots. About this time he produced the tragedy of *Don Carlos*, one of the most valuable of his plays, and the one which marked decisively the adoption of his second manner. He also employed himself a good deal in historical studies, and published the first

volume of a History of the Revolution of the Netherlands, a work which he never completed. The specimen, which appeared, was, however, greatly admired by the public, and pointed out its author as a suitable person to succeed the celebrated Eichhorn, who had just resigned the professorship of history in the university of Jena. The friends of Schiller, particularly the poet Goethe, made interest in his favor, and he obtained the place.

Schiller had made the acquaintance of Goethe a short time before, when the latter was upon his return from his journey into Italy. He had formed the highest idea of his character and talents; and seems upon his first introduction to have been somewhat dissatisfied with the deportment of his brother poet, who was discoursing with great life and fluency upon the objects he had lately seen, and seemed much too gay and good-humored for the author of the Sorrows of Werther. In a letter written at this time, Schiller expresses his discontent as follows :

‘ The high idea, that I had formed of the character of Goethe, has not been diminished by our interview; but I doubt whether we ever become very intimate with each other. He has outlived many of the illusions, to which I am now most sensible. Indeed our intellectual constitutions appear to be originally different; his world is not mine; our modes of thinking are radically at variance. It may be rash, however, to draw this conclusion from a single conversation. Time will show the truth.’

In fact, the kindness and friendly deportment of Goethe towards the disappointed bard induced the latter very soon to change his opinion. Goethe, who was in high favor at the court of Weimar, presented Schiller to the grand duchess. Her highness gave him a very gracious reception, and Schiller, in the letter which describes it,

seems already half disposed to forgive the gaiety of his celebrated friend :

‘ Who was it, think you,’ says he to his correspondent, ‘ that procured me an introduction to the duchess ? No other than Goethe. You shake your head significantly at this ; and well you may. I have learned, however, not to judge in future of characters hastily and from preconceived notions. Goethe is really a good man. He has faults ; but he has been led into them by others. They do not belong to his natural character.’

The meaning of the last phrase, seems to be, that the author of the Sorrows was originally as melancholy as a gentleman ought to be, but that flattery and success had corrupted him into his present good humor. The assistance rendered by Goethe in the affair of the professorship confirmed Schiller in his good opinion, and they continued ever after fast and intimate friends. In the year 1790, soon after his establishment at Jena, Schiller espoused the Fräulein von Lengefeld, and the union ‘appears to have been a very happy one. As an encouragement to matrimony, we add the following extracts from letters written a few months after :

‘ It is a very different thing,’ says the poet, ‘ even in summer, to live with a kind and loving wife, from what it is to be left all alone to one’s self. I now begin to enjoy in reality the beauties of nature. Every thing puts on a poetical aspect, and fills me with inspiration.’ — And again : — ‘ What a charming life I now lead. I look about me with *unaffected gaiety*, [*sic* ?] and enjoy a continual satisfaction of mind and heart. A beautiful harmony pervades my whole existence. My days pass off without the excitement of passion, and in the midst of a sweet and undisturbed serenity. I look forward to the future with confidence and cheerfulness ; and now that I have attained the object of all my wishes, I am astonished myself at my own success. Prov-

idence has smoothed all difficulties, and brought me happily to the goal. I hope every thing from the future. In a few years my intellect will reach its full maturity, [he was then thirty-two] and I even flatter myself, that I shall at the same time renew my youth in the constant exercise of warm feelings and an active imagination.'

These pure pleasures and sanguine hopes were unfortunately of short duration. The year after his marriage, the poet was violently attacked with a pulmonary complaint, which greatly diminished the enjoyment of his after life, and which finally brought it to a close. His illness is attributed in part to the injurious influence of the mode, which he had adopted of composition and study. He uniformly devoted the day to society, recreation, or business; and reserved his poetical labors for the night, almost the whole of which was often employed in the cabinet. On these occasions, he kept at his side a cup of strong coffee, or a goblet of Rhenish, and recurred to them at times to recruit his strength. In the silence of night he was often heard by the neighbors declaiming with great energy; and from a house that overlooked his study, he might be seen, striding violently up and down the room, and then seating himself to write, or renewing his inspiration from the goblet. In this manner he labored till four or five o'clock in the morning in winter, and till three in summer. He then went to bed, and slept till nine or ten. It is not surprising, that these habits should have destroyed his health at an early age, and finally removed him from the world while his intellect was still in full vigor and activity. We may add here, that his manner of writing was slow and laborious; a fact, which appears at first rather singular, considering the number of hours which he appears to have devoted every day to this purpose. He never wrote rapidly; and on some of his plays he was employed for four or five years in suc-

cession. His habits in this respect, like those of other writers, were probably in part the result of circumstances, and did not arise from any original peculiarity of intellect. They were perhaps more fortunate for his ultimate reputation, than others would have been of an opposite kind. Rapidity of composition is not incompatible with a high degree of merit, but is very rarely combined with the substantial richness and the exquisite polish, which alone can give a work a solid and lasting value. Besides, as the worth of poetry, like that of the precious metals and the most esteemed spices, depends in a great degree upon its rarity, the dealers in the article would do well, for their own interest, to limit the quantity of their supplies, even supposing the quality to be the same, for fear of overstocking the market, and permanently injuring the demand.

Schiller appears to have resigned his professorship, or at least to have suspended his attention to its duties, after the attack of illness above mentioned, although the fact is not precisely stated by the biographer, and was thus deprived of his ordinary means of living. The munificence of the duke of Holstein Augustenberg, and some other persons of high rank, obviated any anxiety, that he might have felt upon this head; and enabled him to give himself the temporary repose from labor of every kind, which was necessary to his health. He continued to reside at Jena till 1799, when he removed to Weimar, and fixed his abode there for the rest of his life.

During the time that he passed at Jena his studies had principally taken a historical direction, and one of their fruits was the History of the thirty years' War. This work, in the shape in which it now appears, is little better than a fragment, although the narrative is brought down to the peace of Westphalia. The earlier events of the war are described with fulness and care, and in



a very masterly style ; but after the death of Gustavus, and the assassination of Wallenstein, the historian seems to lose his interest in the subject, and the events are hurried over with too much rapidity. Had the whole been finished with equal care, the work would have been one of the most valuable of its class to be found in any language ; nor can it be read in its present state without extreme pleasure. The subject is happily chosen, and does not yield in interest to that of Thucydides. It may be remarked, however, that the author, by conceiving it more largely, might have given it a much loftier and more philosophical character. The Reformation was the great political action, of which the 'Thirty Years' war formed the concluding scene ; and it is impossible for a historian to do full justice to any part of the long succession of momentous events, to which this name is attached, without giving a complete view of the whole. Treated in this way, the subject is perhaps the best in the whole compass of history. Embracing a period of little more than a century, it is not too vast for a single work ; and while it affords the richest variety of incidents it possesses at the same time the charm of complete unity. The action commences with the promulgation of the new religion by the preaching of Luther. The vast commonwealth of Europe, through its several branches, divides itself immediately into two parties, one occupied in resisting and attempting to crush this momentous innovation, the other bent upon giving it an acknowledged and authentic character. The struggles of these parties in the fields of negotiation, and of civil and foreign war, make up the history of Europe for more than a century ; and the interest continually increases in intensity, until at length all the powers are involved in a great final contest of thirty years in succession, which ends with the solemn consecration of the new doctrine, as an

acknowledged religion at the peace of Westphalia. It is obvious, that the high moral considerations, in which these events had their origin, give them an importance much superior to that of ordinary wars, and occasion an uncommon and very agreeable variety in the characters and incidents to be described. Priests and soldiers, kings and cardinals, monks and ladies occupy the stage by turns, and we are not fatigued with the continual recurrence of similar events, that becomes so monstrous in most histories. In short, the subject unites, perhaps, in the highest possible degree, the materials for political and philosophical discussion and poetical description. When treated in parts, the moral interest in a great measure disappears, and the portion selected can hardly be made to excite more attention, than any merely political event of equal importance. The Reformation must be handled superficially, and still becomes an unwieldy and cumbrous episode, that rather injures than increases the effect. The work of Robertson, who in his *Charles V* has taken up the commencement of this great action, and that of Schiller, who describes the close, are in this respect obnoxious to the same objection. The subject in its true form and grandeur still remains unattempted; and invites the labor of some powerful and philosophical pen, competent, if any such there be, to do it justice.

Schiller seems to have been more attracted by the poetical capacities of the subject, than by its political and philosophical interest; and after proceeding in his history as far as the death of Wallenstein, he probably relinquished the idea of completing it in the same way, for the purpose of employing the materials he had collected in the form of poetry. He conceived at first the plan of an epic poem, of which Gustavus Adolphus was to have been the hero. In his letters written at this time, he remarks, that

‘of all historical subjects the life of Gustavus Adolphus combines in the highest degree the materials of poetical with those of political and national interest. The history of the Thirty Years’ war includes that of the Reformation, as an indispensable episode, and the history of the Reformation has the closest connexion with the principal events in the fortunes of the human race. The poet, therefore, has it in his power to introduce by a just arrangement the whole history of man in a heroic poem, of which the immediate subject should extend from the battle of Leipsic to that of Lützen; and to treat it much more agreeably than he could in any other way.’

This plan, however, he also relinquished, and finally determined to employ his materials in writing a tragedy upon the death of Wallenstein. He seems to have labored this play much more than any of the others, as it was seven years from the time he formed the plan of it, till its completion. The effect, however, does not appear to be proportionately great; and the tragedy, although generally regarded as one of the best, and from the nature of the subject peculiarly interesting to a German audience, has no marked superiority over others, that were written in a much shorter time. It is probable, that the state of the author’s health at this time prevented him from laboring with his usual assiduity. The subject of Wallenstein is wrought up into three poems. The first part, entitled Wallenstein’s Camp, is a short piece in one act, and serves as a prologue to the principal play. It is a sort of comedy, exhibiting a view of the interior of a military encampment, and is executed with great power. The Two Piccolomini is a domestic tragedy, founded on the loves of Wallenstein’s daughter and the younger Piccolomini, whose father was at the same time employed by the Imperial government to assassinate their commander in chief. Wallenstein’s Death exhibits the bloody catastrophe, which terminated the projects of

this aspiring soldier. The subject is, upon the whole, a good one, though rather deficient in incident; and the character of Wallenstein, with his irresolute ambition, his domestic tenderness, and his hankering after astrology, is highly dramatic.

During the time of Schiller's residence at Jena, he also projected one or two other poems, which were never written. The account of these projects, given by himself in his letters, is curious and amusing. He intended at one time to attempt an epic founded upon some action in the life of the great Frederic.

'The plan of founding an epic poem upon some remarkable action in the life of Frederick,' he observes, 'is highly plausible; nor would the apparent difficulty of treating events so near our own time affright me very much. A heroic poem, written in the eighteenth century, ought to be a very different thing from one that was produced in the infancy of the world; and this is the very reason, that makes me wish to attempt one. It ought to exhibit in a free and unconstrained way the quintessence of our manners, arts, and sciences: just as the Iliad gives us a complete idea of the state of civilization in Greece. I also wish to invent a machinery, for I should make it a point not to deviate a hair's breadth from the strictest formal rules of the poem. This would be the most difficult part with so recent an action passing in a very prosaic age; but then if I can succeed in it, the effect will be so much the greater. I have all sorts of plans upon the subject, but am not yet satisfied with any. In regard to the measure, you will be rather surprised, that I have chosen the *ottava rima*; this is the only kind of verse, except Iambics, that I can abide, and I think that the sublimity and gravity of the matter will appear to great advantage in this easy and simple dress. The sweet and graceful flow of this stanza will be charming in an epic poem. I should wish, that my countrymen might sing it as the Grecian peasants did the Iliad, and the boatmen of Venice the Jerusalem Delivered. I have not yet decided on the particular action, which ought, if pos-

sible, to be very simple, however numerous may be the episodes. I should however give a view of the whole life of Frederic, and his principal contemporaries. For a work like this, there is no better model, than the *Iliad*.'

In the following extracts from his letters, he gives an account of another plan, that he had formed, of a poem, which he calls an *Idyll*; but which, had it been written, could not have had much resemblance to any other production known by that title.

'My Land of Shadows,' he observes, speaking of one of his published poems, 'is merely didactic. Had the subject been treated as poetically, as that of the *Elegy*, the work would have been, in some sort, a master-piece; and I mean to make this attempt as soon as I have leisure. I intend to write an *Idyll* in the same way, that I did the *Elegy*. I am collecting all my poetical powers for this purpose, which is in general to produce without the help of pathos the highest poetical effect. My Land of Shadows contains the rules for this, and I mean that the *Idyll* shall afford an example. The immediate subject will be the marriage of Hebe and Hercules. It is impossible to go higher than this, because the poet must keep within the circle of humanity; and the scope of the poem will be to exhibit the human nature, rising into the divine. The leading characters would be gods; but Hercules would form a connecting link between them and men, and would give the poem an action. Such an *Idyll* would be in some respects the exact reverse of the higher comedy, while it would resemble it considerably in form. Both exclude pathos; but comedy treats of real life, while the *Idyll* dwells wholly in the ideal. If I find this plan impracticable, and become satisfied, that ideal images do not admit of being presented in the form of actual persons, I shall then think, as I have always thought until the plan of this poem occurred to me, that comedy is the highest kind of poem. But only think how delightful it must be to bring out a poetical picture free from any mortal mixture—all light—all freedom—all power—no shadows or shackles of any kind. My head turns when I think of

the possibility of realizing this plan. I do not quite despair of it, provided I can once fairly clear my intellect of the rubbish of reality. I shall then summon up all my energies, and set to work, though I exhaust them in the attempt. Ask me no questions. The entire scheme is still undefined, and it will take a great deal of labor and study to ascertain whether it can even be attempted.'

From the time when Schiller removed to Weimar in 1799, until his death, which happened in 1805, he abandoned all other studies, and devoted himself exclusively to poetry, and principally to the drama. During this period he produced in succession the tragedies of *Maria Stuart*, the *Maid of Orleans*, the *Bride of Messina*, and *William Tell*. He had also commenced another upon the subject of the Russian adventurer, commonly called the *False Demetrius*, which he left unfinished. All these plays exhibit the full maturity and vigor of the author's powers, and met with complete success at the time of their appearance. The *Maid of Orleans* is generally considered the most remarkable and attractive.

It would be difficult to find a historical subject better adapted for the purposes of poetry, than the life of this celebrated heroine; and accordingly none perhaps has been attempted by more hands, or treated in a greater variety of forms. Her first appearance on any stage, as far at least as our knowledge extends, is in Shakspeare's *Henry VI*; and the open injustice, which she met with from the great dramatist, was but too true a prognostic of her future fortunes in the same line, at least for a long period. If the play be really Shakspeare's, which is a matter of doubt, it must have been one of his earlier and immature productions, as it exhibits very little of his superior genius in any part, and certainly none in the scenes where *Joan of Arc* is introduced. The poet, far from showing any sense of the poetical beauty and grandeur

of her extraordinary character, either felt or affected all the vulgar prejudices in regard to it, which might have belonged at the time to the meanest common soldier in the English army; and seems to have taken pleasure in wantonly degrading her to the lowest point of immorality. Nor is it a sufficient reason for this to say, that he puts into the mouths of British officers the language, which they may really be supposed to have uttered, since he represents the heroine, as charging herself with low and sordid vices. This manner of treating a noble character is so foreign to the free and magnanimous spirit of Shakespeare, that we prefer believing the play, at least in this part, to be really by another hand. However this may be, the unhappy heroine was reserved for still severer fortunes. Calumniated by a man of genius, or by one who assumes his name, she was next exposed to the still more tormenting martyrdom of being eulogized by a dunce, having been selected by Chapelain, a now forgotten poet of the age of Louis XIV, as the heroine of one of those compositions in twelve or twenty-four books, which, under the name of epic poems, have in all ages demonstrated the patience of their authors, and exhausted that of every body else. Lastly, as a reward for delivering her country from a foreign enemy, and sacrificing her life in the cause, she was stretched on the rack of satire by the greatest wit that France has ever produced, and ridiculed through twenty books of a licentious poem, as she had been celebrated in twenty-four of another, which, unfortunately was but too serious. After this, however, the fatality, that had hitherto pursued her, relented. It is true, that Mr Southey's attempt to restore her character was not very effectual; but the treatment of the laureate was at least much more tolerable, than that of his predecessors, and the heroine might with propriety employ the old Homeric consolation, that she had suffered worse be-

fore. It was finally reserved for a German to do full justice, in the most splendid manner, to this young French woman, and to give her the crown of poetical glory, which she certainly merited, if any achievement could give her a right to it. The indifference of so gallant a nation as the French to the worth of this young and beautiful heroine, is a singular fact, which has also been noticed by some of their own best writers. It seems to have extended to the circumstances of her history and personal situation; and the place of her residence was but little known or regarded until the entry of the allied armies into France in 1814 and 1815. The German officers and soldiers, full of the enthusiasm for her character, inspired by Schiller's tragedy, sought out the village of Domremi, where she was born, and which lay near the road to Paris; and the French authorities, reminded by this occurrence of the interest connected with the birth-place of the Maid of Orleans, have since instituted an annual celebration in her remembrance:

‘ Such honors Ilion to her hero paid,  
And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's shade.’

Notwithstanding the great poetical capability of this subject, it must always be a matter of considerable difficulty for a writer, who undertakes to treat it, to determine in the first instance under what point of view the character of the heroine shall be presented, and indeed what her character really was. Her great and brilliant services to her country are unquestionable; but it would not be easy to ascertain, as a point of history, or even as a probable conjecture, whether she was a machine in the hands of others, a mere enthusiast, or a real heroine, or in what degrees she united these different characters. As a subject for poetry, she must necessarily be drawn as a real heroine, strongly tinctured perhaps with enthusiasm;



and this seems to have been in the first instance the intention of Schiller. In this case it would have been somewhat difficult to make her character appear consistent with her education and early habits. For this or some other reason, Schiller, after writing a great part of the play upon this plan, abandoned it altogether, and determined to represent his principal personage as acting under the influence of an immediate inspiration from heaven. The following extracts are given from his letters in regard to this tragedy :

‘I had this subject under consideration a year before I began to write, and I gave myself full time for the composition. The Maid of Orleans is indeed a subject quite *unique* in its kind, and may well be a favorite one with modern poets, as Iphigenia was with the Greeks. It has been accordingly attempted by bards without number, real or pretended. In treating her history, I finally concluded to give it the coloring of romance and superstition, that belongs to her age. I had projected three different plans for the composition of this tragedy ; and if I had leisure, I would even now execute the two others. I was especially satisfied with the one, in which I intended to exhibit the contrast between the reckless indifference, that prevailed at the luxurious court of the Dauphin, in regard to the British invasion, and the high resolution of the inspired heroine, in a different way from that in which it appears in the piece, as it stands, where I have represented the Dauphin as a weak but amiable prince. I had already finished the four first acts, and it cost me a strong effort to change my system, and substitute a romantic conception of the character of Joan, for the historical one, which I had previously adopted.’

The tragedy, written upon this plan, loses of course the pretension to be a true picture of life, and becomes a mere dramatic poem. It is called by Schiller a *romantic tragedy*. The propriety of this appellation seems to be called in question by the biographer, whose remarks

upon the subject are so very curious, and so much in the character of a German writer, that we cannot refrain from extracting them.

'Schiller,' he observes, 'has given to this poem the title of a romantic tragedy, but at that time the meaning of the word *romantic* had not been defined with much precision. According to our present ideas on subjects of taste, it means, as is well known, *an infinite longing after the absolute and infinite, and is thus opposed to the antique, which is the infinite realized in a positive shape*. But the poet does not seem to have had this distinction in view; and indeed upon this definition, the character of romantic is inseparable from all modern works of art, and belongs of course to the other tragedies of Schiller as well as to this.'

If any thing could be conceived more amusing than this definition of the term *romantic*, it would be the perfect simplicity and sincerity, with which the biographer presents it as the one now generally received by the learned. It would be impossible by any analysis to make such language appear more absurd, than it must to every judicious reader at the first glance. We have quoted it principally as a curiosity, and as a specimen of a style of writing very common in German, though almost unknown to the other modern languages. We have hardly any examples of it in English, with the exception, perhaps, of Mr Coleridge's *Literary Life and Friend*, where the amateurs of this manner will find a choice treat. Mrs Malaprop, in the *Rivals*, and some of the clown's replies to sir Andrew Aguecheek, in the *Twelfth Night*, are much in the same way. As to the question in hand, we conceive that Schiller was perfectly right in applying the term *romantic* to his tragedy of the *Maid of Orleans*. The word, as is well known, is derived from the common patronymic *Roman*, which was used, of course, by the Romans to designate their own language, and was

retained for this purpose in France, after the Latin language had assumed the corrupt form of the earlier French. It probably designated at first all compositions written in that language; but was afterwards appropriated exclusively to fictitious narratives in prose, in which sense it is still employed in French and English. *Romantic* means, therefore, etymologically, nothing more than *fictitious*, in distinction from *historical*; but as novels and romances commonly depart as much from the truth of nature in their execution, as they do from that of history in their plan, the term has been much used of late in the former sense, as well as in the latter. In giving his tragedy the title of romantic, Schiller intended to intimate, that he had purposely deviated from the truth of history and nature, in the conception of his principal character, whereas in his other plays he at least makes it his object, whether effectually or not, to conform to them. The distinction between the *romantic* and the *classical* in works of art, so much talked of at present on the continent of Europe, if it means any thing else than the difference, to which we have just alluded, between the *natural* and *unnatural*, or in a shorter phrase, the *good* and *bad*, we conceive to be wholly baseless, or founded on abstractions, that, when divested of the unintelligible jargon, in which they are commonly expressed, are either futile or absurd. Thus we are told by Mr Doering in the definition above quoted, that *the romantic is an infinite longing after the infinite*; and then, that *the antique is the infinite itself in a positive shape*. Why then, of course, by the rules of algebra, the romantic is an infinite longing after the antique; and yet the two qualities are at the same time placed in formal opposition to each other. Again; 'all modern works of art are necessarily romantic;' including, doubtless, those of Racine and Pope amongst others. What then becomes of the distinction between

the romantic and the classical in modern works of art, which it is the precise object of the writers, who usually hold this language, to insist on ?

We shall not, however, tire the reader's patience by any further disquisitions on so plain a point, but proceed without delay to the close of our narrative. The reception given to the Maid of Orleans by the public was flattering to the author in the highest degree. Among other proofs of the general approbation, it is mentioned, that when the curtain fell at the end of the first act; during the first representation of this play upon the Leipsic stage, the building resounded with acclamations of 'Long live Frederic Schiller.' After the play was over, the whole audience crowded into the street to see the poet, upon his coming out of the house, and forming two long lines on the sides of the way, stood with uncovered heads till he had passed through. It is pleasing to see the most potent and public testimonials of success conferred, as in this case, upon real merit. At the same time, when we remark the uncertainty and capriciousness of the first decision of the literary public, when we see, for example, such romances as those of Mr D'Arlincourt passing through seven or eight editions in as many months, in such a place as Paris; when we learn that the farce, entitled Tom and Jerry, or Life in London, has been the most productive, and the School for Scandal the least so of the dramatic performances exhibited for many years upon the English stage, we are compelled to acknowledge, that such attestations of worth, however flattering at the time, are not, after all, the most certain and valuable.

We have had occasion in the course of this article to mention all the works of Schiller of any magnitude, with the exception of the Ghost Seer, a romance, of which the first volume only was published. In this work, as far

as one can judge of it from a short fragment, the author intended to employ the same means of exciting interest, which were resorted to by our countryman Brown, who may possibly have taken some hints from Schiller, as he seems to have been acquainted with German literature. Besides the works we have mentioned, Schiller contributed a great number of fugitive pieces, in prose and verse, to a variety of literary journals, conducted by himself and others. Many of his shorter poems made their appearance in this way, and they are amongst the most highly finished and exquisite productions of the kind to be found in any language. The singular variety in the subjects and tones of them shows the extraordinary versatility of the author's genius. It would be difficult to point out a more animated serious lyric poem, than the Ode to Pleasure. The ballads, as for example, the Diver and Fridolin, are written with the most charming felicity of style. The Bell is quite an original poem, founded on an entirely new conception, wrought up and finished with extraordinary power and beauty in a few hundred lines. If a speculating bard of the present day had hit upon such a subject, he would have rung at least a dozen changes upon it through as many cantos. There are even two or three very pleasing specimens of the comic style, for which, however, Schiller had in general but little taste. All these pieces are known by heart through the whole educated portion of the German nation, and if their author had never written any thing else, would have given him a lasting rank among the greatest poets that have ever lived. One of the least attractive to us of the minor poems, is the Walk, an Elegy, which the author himself mentions, in one of his letters above quoted, as among the very best of all his productions. The versification of this piece is imitated from the antique Hexameter and Pentameter, which to our taste has but little

charm for the ear, even in German, where it succeeds better than in other modern languages.

The literary activity of Schiller continued undiminished up to the time of his death, which happened at Weimar, on the ninth of May 1805, after a short illness, at the age of five and forty. Occurring in the full maturity of his intellectual powers, and when his countrymen expected so much pleasure from their farther exercise, it excited a strong sensation through the whole of Germany. The theatre at Weimar was closed upon this occasion, and was reopened after a while by a representation of the *Maid of Orleans*, accompanied by a solemn funeral ceremony in honor of the author. The anniversary of his death has been observed ever since at the same place by a repetition of his tragedy of *Wallenstein*. He left a widow and five children. The following particulars are given by the biographer respecting his manners, person, and character :

‘Schiller was tall and thin, though naturally of a powerful make. The activity of his mind had evidently checked the full development of his body. His face was pale, the expression of his eye mild and gentle ; his forehead high and open ; his cheeks hollow ; his chin a little projecting, and his hair reddish. His exterior was not very attractive. In walking, his looks were always bent downwards ; and he often passed his acquaintance without recognizing them, but when he perceived them, he greeted them with great kindness. In large companies, and especially at court, his manner was reserved and anxious. In the family circle, or among a few intimate friends, he was easy, cheerful, and talkative. He took particular pleasure in a literary society, which was formed at Weimar after he went to reside there, and of which Goethe was one of the principal members. His disposition was eminently kind and friendly, and he felt for others as warmly as for himself ; often declaring, that he had no other wish than to see others happy and contented.

‘He was not fond of public and noisy amusements, and fre-

quented no places of general resort, except the theatre ; to which he was naturally much attached. He also took delight in instructing the actors. The rehearsals of the new pieces were regularly held either at his house or Goethe's ; and this circumstance often had a favorable influence on the talent of the players. Schiller's notions were very high in regard to good acting, and it was rather difficult to satisfy him. After the successful representation of any of his later dramatic works, he commonly gave an entertainment to the actors at the town-house, which passed off very pleasantly with songs, improvisations, and all sorts of gaiety.'

Having offered in the course of this article such critical remarks as had occurred to us upon the writings of Schiller, it will not be necessary to dwell any longer upon his poetical character. It is much to his honor, that all his writings are distinguished by a pure morality, and an elevated tone of thought and feeling. In making this remark, we mean, of course, to except the Robbers, for reasons which we have already explained at length. Though not, strictly speaking, licentious, the moral of this play is certainly exceptionable. The rest of his works, whether in prose or verse, are uniformly fitted to encourage the noblest and most amiable sentiments. Few poets of any country, who have flourished at advanced periods in the progress of civilization, deserve this praise to the same extent. His two great contemporaries, Goethe and Wieland, for example, are by no means so pure as Schiller, though the tendency of their works is, in general, far from being absolutely vicious. In the infancy of letters and society, poetry speaks the language of the gods ; but as luxury increases, it is too apt to leave its lofty heights and to dwell in preference on frivolous or sensual subjects. The most esteemed modern poets of England and France furnish many examples of the truth of this remark. It is therefore a great happiness for a

nation, when a writer like Schiller, whose talents secure him an unbounded popularity and influence, has the grace to exert them uniformly in the great cause of virtue and human happiness. No compensation in the power of subjects or sovereigns to bestow can be too great for such deserts :

‘ Quæ tibi, quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona ? ’

We may say with safety, that the patent of nobility in the degree of baron, which the grand duke of Weimar wrought out, as the biographer expresses it, *auswirkte*, for Schiller, of his own mere motion, was not an extravagant reward, though intended doubtless as a high distinction.



## GEOFFROY ON FRENCH DRAMATIC LITERATURE.\*

[North American Review, April, 1890.]

THIS work is a collection of theatrical articles, published successively in one of the French newspapers, from about the year 1800 to the year 1814. They were considered at the time so much superior to the ordinary ephemeral matter which appears in this form, that they gave a very great vogue to the *Journal de l'Empire*. It is said that twenty thousand copies were at that time circulated daily. An edition of about six thousand was and is the ordinary sale of the best French journals. The author, M. Geoffroy, had been Professor of Rhetoric at the *Collège Mazarin* at Paris before the revolution. Soon after the beginning of the troubles, his political orthodoxy was called in question, and he thought it expedient to retire for a time from his station and take refuge in the country. He offered himself to some parish committee, as a candidate for the office of village schoolmaster, having previously assumed a rustic tone and dress. His qualifications being found sufficient for the place, he entered upon it, and retained it till the return of Bonaparte had restored some degree of order at Paris. Soon after this he repaired to the capital and was immediately attached to the *Journal des Débats*, as it was then called, as editor of the theat-

\* *Cours de littérature dramatique ; ou Recueil, par ordre de matières, des feuilletons de Geoffroy, précédé d'une notice historique sur sa vie.* 4 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1819. The fifth volume, completing the work, was published in 1820.

rical department, by no means the least essential one in all the French journals. This department is occupied, in general, by a notice of the new pieces, as they appear, or by a criticism on the merits of the actors. But Geoffroy gave it a wider range, and undertook a vigorous and free analysis of every thing that was acted, old or new. He examines with the same boldness and care the works of Corneille, Racine, Molière and Voltaire, as those of the contemporary writers. Hence, these articles became, as they are entitled in this collection, *a course of lectures on the dramatic literature of France*; and what they want in solidity from the ephemeral form in which they made their appearance, is amply compensated by the vivacity and point derived from the same cause.

It is obvious that the author, in order to execute an enterprise of this kind with so much success, must have possessed very considerable literary merit; and accordingly his style places him very high among the modern French writers. It is manly and vigorous, and at the same time pure; although of course very unequal in different articles. There is a vein of bitterness and satire running through the whole, which is very amusing, and is perhaps essential to the success of a critic. The author's opinions in literature and philosophy took their colour, like those of other people, from the circumstances of his life and education. He received the latter in one of the Jesuits' colleges, where he was naturally taught the opinions of the old school, and the persecutions they afterwards brought upon him as naturally endeared them to him still more strongly. Every thing modern, and above all every thing that savours of the modern philosophy, is an abomination to him. The age of Louis XIV is the golden age of France in learning and politics. The best writers of the last century bear no comparison with the geniuses of that period, and those of the present day are mere pig-

mies, almost too contemptible to require being crushed. These ideas taken in the abstract are as old as the age of Nestor, and about as probable now as they were then; but they may be defended at different times with different degrees of plausibility, and it must be allowed, that, at least in a literary point of view, Geoffroy makes out a pretty good case on this side of the question. The colossal reputation of Voltaire was the principal objection to his theory, and he accordingly loses no opportunity of attacking him with any weapon that is most convenient. The collection is interspersed with occasional digressions on subjects of moral, political, and historical interest, anecdotes, bon mots, and biographical sketches, so that it forms altogether a very pleasant reading for a leisure hour, and we venture to hope that a few notices and extracts will contribute to the entertainment of some of our readers.

The great Corneille is of course the god of our author's idolatry. Corneille with every true born Frenchman is the *beau idéal* of the sublime, as Racine is of the beautiful. The former of these distinguished poets was, in the first instance, according to our critic, a 'little lawyer' at Rouen. We find him in the next place attached to the service of Cardinal Richelieu, in rather a singular capacity. The Cardinal, who justly holds a high rank among the statesmen of Europe, seems to have thought that he could carry into poetry the same process that he employed in politics. As in the accomplishment of his political designs he left all the trouble of the execution to his agents, civil and military, while he reserved to himself all the glory of the success, he seems to have supposed that by ordering plays to be written and acted in his name, he should be justly entitled to the reputation of a dramatic poet. He accordingly appointed a committee of five poets, corresponding in number with the acts

necessary to a perfect play, and when he wanted to write a tragedy he issued his orders, and each of his poets produced an act. Corneille was one of this committee. Our critic reprimands the Cardinal for this singular abuse of authority with just severity.

'The *metromania* or rather the *theatromania* of Cardinal Richelieu is one of the most singular absurdities which ever could have crazed the head of a prelate or a minister. It was both strange and indecent to see a Cardinal of the holy Roman church amusing himself with writing comedies, while the church was anathematizing comedies and comedians. Nothing could be more ridiculous than a great statesman travestied into a poor author and miserable poet. The great minister, whose vast designs confounded the pride of Austria and made Europe tremble, seemed very small, when he was painfully planning the miserable intrigue of a flat tragi-comedy.

'Richelieu introduced upon the world's stage some tragedies, such as *Montmorency*, *Cinq-mars*, and *de Thou*, *Marillac*, *Urbain-Grandier* &c \*; these might inspire terror and pity;—but his tragi-comedies could cause nothing but disgust and ennui. Strange! the most profound politician of his age enlivened his dramas with mere commonplaces and trifles, while a little lawyer of Rouen, an obscure man, shut up in his cabinet, introduced into his pieces the greatest interests and the most profound policy. Corneille was upon the stage what Richelieu was in the council room. Each filled his place.'

The Cardinal, who was aware no doubt that a piece, in order to produce any reputation to its author, must not only contain the five necessary acts, but must be applauded by the public, after providing for the first of these conditions in the way just mentioned, instituted a commission of forty, whose business it was to praise the pieces published in his name, and condemn all others.

\* The reader will remember that all the persons mentioned were executed, by order of Richelieu, as conspirators.

This body was called the French Academy. It seems to have been considered a point of honour with the five poets not to produce any thing in their own names, at least nothing better than what they published under that of the Cardinal's. Hence, when Corneille published the famous *Cid*, the earliest good tragedy in the French language, it was regarded by the Cardinal as an act of petit-treason, and although one of the privileged poets, the author was immediately delivered over to the forty judges to be tried and punished in the ordinary way. These matters are treated by our author with due solemnity.

'The haughty prelate carried his despotism into literature. He attempted to regulate opinion, to enslave men of letters, to tyrannize over taste. The Academy was, in the outset, only a kind of commission established to judge those who undertook to have more genius and talent than he. He did not erect the tribunal to maintain the purity of the language, but to restrain those authors who would have broken the yoke. There were in it, five versifiers in ordinary from the cabinet of his Eminence; these were the negroes whom the Cardinal charged with the execution of his plans: — they are known as "the five authors." Corneille was so unfortunate as to be of this number.

'And he, who only breathed Roman liberty, was on the point of disgrace and degradation from his position because he was bold enough to make some change in the part assigned to him. He was then accused of rebellion, but soon after he openly displayed the standard of revolt in producing the *Cid*. The court and town rose in favor of his tragedy, the first of the chefs d'œuvre of Corneille and of our tragic drama. The Cardinal, angry with the author, and as much alarmed, says Fontenelle, at his success as if he had seen the Spaniards at the gates of Paris, at first attacked the *Cid* with his most intrepid officers, and then ordered his regiment of Academicians to charge. If the public had not made a vigorous resistance, this piece, the pride of our stage, would have sunk beneath the blows of a Chapelain, a Desmarest, a Boisrobert, a Conrart and a Gombault;

—such men! gods, such heroes! whose names now, stained as they are by satire, are matter of ridicule and reproach. Thus it may be seen that the cradle of the French Academy was not encircled with palms or trophies; it was born in slavery and contempt, in the sound of hisses and hooting, in the bosom of ridicule and bad taste:—its origin reminds us of nothing but disgrace and ignominy, and when in the days of its glory it saw united in its body the élite of all the greatness of France, it was like those wealthy financiers whose fathers and grandfathers have walked in livery.'

The judgment of the Academy upon the *Cid* is a well known piece of criticism. The heroine of this tragedy has the misfortune to be in love with a person, who has killed her father, and the interest of the piece lies in the conflict of feeling produced by these opposite relations. The lady at one moment goes to court to urge the infliction of some punishment upon her father's murderer, and at another gives him a private meeting in her own house. The immorality of this attachment is principally insisted upon by the Academy in their attack upon the play. They represent the morals of *Chimène* as scandalous and depraved, and consider it essential to a good tragedy that the leading characters should be persons of unblemished reputation, otherwise, they say, the effect of the piece is morally bad. Our critic admits that this is true, but denies the conclusion. According to him the influence of the theatre is in general unfavourable to good principles, and that, in proportion to the merit of the works represented. This is his favourite doctrine through the whole four volumes, and perhaps may be looked upon as a precious confession from a man, who for the greater part of his life passed all his evenings at the play, and all his days in writing remarks upon what he had seen the night before. The question, however, is a famous point of casuistry, which has been agitated at various times with

great warmth. Rousseau's letter to d' Alembert is a brilliant and vigorous defence of the unfavorable side. The early puritans in England attacked the stage with great violence; and in our own country, so late as the close of the last century, the clergy, with the more serious part of the community in Boston, united in petitions against the building of the theatre, and the players were obliged for some time to act their comedies in a barn, under the disguise of 'a moral lecture on the duty of candour, entitled the School for Scandal.' The question perhaps resolves itself into the more general one, whether the development of the intellect and the refinement of the feelings are favourable to happiness and virtue. D' Alembert in the article *Geneva* in the *Encyclopedia*, which gave occasion to the letter of Rousseau, considers the stage as a powerful machine for polishing society. This opinion is hardly to be disputed, and if the new German theory be correct, which makes taste, morality, and religion, only synonymous terms for the same thing, would go far in deciding the question. A great part of Rousseau's reply is fantastical, and as a substitute for theatrical entertainments he recommends public balls, which it is well known are not less obnoxious to the stricter casuists than plays. But we have not room to engage in the discussion of this subject.

Though the Cardinal, as we have seen, did not pamper the great Corneille with 'empty praise,' he gave him what he wanted much more, a pension of 500 crowns a year, equal, says our critic, to 1500 at the present day; and as the sublime poet was too prudent to quarrel with his bread and butter, he revenged himself upon the Cardinal for his persecution of the *Cid*, by dedicating to him his next tragedy, the *Horaces*. Corneille, with all his genius and all his sublimity, had no faculty in turning a compliment. He could not 'dandle the kid' any better than Milton. His praises are so extravagant and so

injudicious, that they might be almost mistaken for irony, did not the known simplicity of the author oppose any such idea.

'Indeed, my lord,' says he, 'the visible change which has been observed in my works since I have had the honor of the patronage of your Excellency, can be only the effect of the great ideas with which your Excellency inspires me, when You have condescended to permit me to pay my respects to you:— and to what can the faults which remain in them be attributed but to my coarse native qualities, to the influence of which I return when I am left to myself?'

The rest is of the same power. The author of the *Cid*, after his patron's death, expressed himself with a little more sincerity, though still with due respect. The epitaph which he wrote for the Cardinal begins, and might perhaps as well have ended, with the following lines:

'Qu'on parle, comme on veut, du fameux Cardinal,  
Ni ma prose ni mes vers n'en diront jamais rien;  
Il m'a fait trop de bien pour en dire du mal,  
Il m'a fait trop du mal pour en dire du bien.'

The tragedies of Corneille are mostly founded on historical events, supposed or real, but with a view of increasing the interest, he generally introduces a love intrigue, more or less directly connected with the principal one. It has long been regarded as a knotty question, how far this system is deserving of approbation. Voltaire inclines to the opinion that where love is introduced at all, the interest created by it should form exclusively the intrigue of the play; and he seems very much disposed to think that this is the only correct system. Political tragedies, he insinuates very clearly, are difficult of execution, and when finished, not worth the trouble. Our worthy Professor is of a contrary opinion. The



'trials of the heart' are in his view of a secondary consequence, compared with the fates of empires and heroes.

'In our times,' he says, 'we have seen so much of passions, follies and crimes more horrible than those of the stage,—fortune has so appalled us by arraying her most terrible phases, and our situation has exposed us to so many real alarms, that *we can hardly conceive it to be a great misfortune not to be loved by one's mistress*. As this is one of the most cruel distresses of the theatre, we need not be surprised that plots resting on love scarcely touch us at all.

'It cannot be doubted that the astonishing and marvellous tragedy which for the last sixteen years has been acted on the great theatre of Europe, the denouement of which must excite the admiration of the universe; that this extraordinary epoch which introduces a new scene into the world, and recommences a series of ages long since foretold by Virgil;—that this succession of prodigies gives a direction to minds, which turns them away from the old coral and bells which were once provided for their amusement. The common *amourettes* which declamation tries to make tragical, seem to us most unworthy of tragedy. *Nicomède* draws better than *Zaïre*. What a change! What indeed, do we care if a little sultan should play the fool for a pretty little slave in his seraglio? What do we care for this romance about the redemption of captives and the galimatias of this *Zaïre*, very much embarrassed by her father, her brother, her religion of which she knows nothing, and her love of which she knows a great deal more? How many lovers, who have sworn that they will not understand each other lest the piece be ended too soon, perish victims of the misunderstanding of a letter!—this is sad, indeed, but it is not tragic, it is only a commonplace adventure, which may make little girls weep but hardly touches men of sense. At this day (1804) tottering or fallen thrones, the destiny of states, the fate of nations, this terrible war between old prejudices and passions and those new ideas which are more favorable to humanity, these sports of fortune, *these hateful alliances*, these are the great objects with which men's minds are occupied, &c. &c.'

Without engaging in the controversy on this subject, we may be permitted to remark that love, if it forms the subject of a tragedy, should be treated naturally and sensibly, like any other. The great fault with the heroes of Corneille, and in some degree, though not so much, with those of Racine and Voltaire, is that they always express their passion and make love to their mistresses in conventional phrases and metaphors which were always extravagant and have long been ridiculous. They talk of the *beaux yeux*, the *divins appas* of their beloved. They represent themselves as loaded with chains and pierced through with arrows. Julius Cesar tells Cleopatra, that it was the influence of her fine eyes that enabled him to gain the battle of Pharsalia and the empire of the world.

Vos beaux yeux enfin m'ayant fait soupirer,  
Pour faire que votre âme avec gloire y réponde  
M'ont rendu le premier et de Rome, et du monde:

The honest Professor with all his admiration for Corneille is somewhat scandalized at this *tirade*. In good earnest, says he, *did Cesar think and talk in this way? Is it not rather the style of Don Quixote addressing his dulcinea?* At other times however he makes a lame apology for this jargon, by putting it to the account of the fashion of the times. Corneille, says he, gave his heroes that noble gallantry which was in vogue at the time of the Fronde. Love was then mingled with all the political intrigues, and produced important events. The princes and nobles of the court had each his mistress. The Duke de Beaufort was the lover of Madame de Montbazen; La Rochefoucault was at the feet of Madame de Longueville; Mademoiselle de Chevreuse ruled the Coadjutor (de Retz); the Duke de Bellegarde, when he went to the army, begged the favour of the Queen to touch the hilt of his

sword; M. de Châtillon wore on his arm in battle one of Mademoiselle de Guerchi's garters. Conversation was filled with the most extravagant language of gallantry. It was the spirit of the age. The women then gave the tone at the theatre and in the world; and the language that we now think flat and silly, charmed all the *précieuses* of the time. Sovereigns are never disgusted with the grossest flattery; and these ladies, who were fully persuaded, because they were constantly assured of it, that they exercised a sovereign not to say divine power over their adorers, could see nothing ridiculous in all the jargon of sighs, languishments, flames, and torments, which we now laugh at, even at the opera. They thought it perfectly natural that their eyes should be stars, suns, and gods; that their complexion should put to shame the rose and lily, and that a single glance should decide the fate of their slaves, &c.

*Au reste*, the phrase *beaux yeux* is so much used in France that a certain Polish Countess, who had learned what little French she knew by rote, and was confined at home soon after her arrival at Paris by an attack of ophthalmia, replied with a perfect readiness to an inquiry after her health, *J'ai mal à mes beaux yeux*, supposing in the simplicity of her heart that *fine eyes* was the appropriate name of the feature in question. The narrator adds in the gallant French style that as she was young and handsome, the mistake was of no great consequence.

The couplet in which the Duke de La Rochefoucault, (so celebrated for his maxims and his misanthropy, which does not seem, like that of Hamlet, to have included the fair sex) commemorates his passion for the fine eyes of Madame de Longueville, has been often cited;

Pour mériter son cœur, pour plaire à ses beaux yeux,  
J'ai fait la guerre aux rois — je l'aurois faite aux dieux.

Corneille had passed the meridian of his powers, and was fast declining from his brightness, when a planet of milder but purer lustre appeared above the theatrical horizon. Racine was formed in the school of his great predecessor, and surpassed him in every thing but the rude vigor of creative genius. The resemblance is the same with that of Pope to Dryden. After two feeble efforts made at too early an age, Racine at the third trial produced his *Andromaque*, and from that time forward his pieces are all perfect in their way, and though some of them are superior to others, are all reckoned by the French critics as plays of the first order. The public was however very capricious with regard to them, at the time of their first appearance; and the three that are now reckoned the best were then treated very coldly. The friends of Corneille seem to have been jealous of the rising fame of Racine, and to have formed a party against him. Madame de Sevigné, could not persuade herself for a long time that a tragedy could be good which was not written by the author of the *Cid*. 'Beware,' she writes to her daughter, 'of imagining that any body can equal Corneille.' She prophesied that the taste for Racine would pass like the taste for coffee; and her prophecy has been fulfilled, though not in the sense she intended.

*Andromaque*, though it met with a good deal of opposition, was still very well received. It had nearly as great a success, says our critic, as the *Cid*; but the elevated hopes of the author met with a terrible reverse at the next attempt. *Britannicus* *tomba*, says the astonished Professor, at the commencement of his remarks on this piece; *plaignez vous à présent, petits auteurs, de la chute de vos faibles essais dramatiques*: It does not even seem to have attracted an audience. A particular account has been preserved of the first representation of

this play, written by Boursault, one of those who did not like it. He says that he found himself very much at his ease in the middle of the pit, and that Corneille was alone in one of the boxes. He makes himself very merry with the feeling displayed by Boileau. 'His face,' says he, 'exhibited all the emotions of the piece, one after the other, and changed colour like a camelion, as the actors proceeded; young Britannicus especially appeared to interest him so much, that he first smiled at the happiness that seemed to be in store for him, and then wept at the recital of his death; a very obliging thing this to keep a fund of tears and smiles always ready at Mr. Racine's service.' This intended ridicule of Boileau is now a charming testimony to his good taste and good heart. 'The noble and generous Boileau,' says Geoffroy, 'as good in friendship as he was great in poetry, distinguished himself on this occasion by his taste and zeal.' *Berenice* and *Bajazet* followed with good success: Corneille, who was present at one of the representations of the latter, observed to his neighbour in the box, 'These Turks are pretty well Frenchified; I say it to you in confidence, for if it was known that I thought so, I should be called jealous.' Madame de Sevigné did not like the *dénouement*. She calls it a *grande tuerie*, a great killery or butchery, but the worthy Professor stands firm and takes them both severely to task.

The next in order are *Mithridate*, *Iphigénie*, and *Phèdre*. The second of these is one of the most popular and perhaps the best adapted to representation of all. The third is now regarded as the best of Racine's tragedies on profane subjects, but failed at the first appearance. Racine was naturally sensitive: he said of himself that he had felt more pain from a single criticism, than pleasure from all the applause he had ever received. The disgust he felt at this new instance of public caprice

seems to have produced on his mind what is now sometimes called a religious *awakening*. He left off writing for the stage, and retired at the age of thirty-eight to a sort of monastery at Port Royal. After this he published nothing but his two religious pieces, *Esther* and *Athalie*.

The fall of *Phèdre* awakens the Professor to more than usual warmth. He attacks the *culprits* who contributed to it, with an indignation proportioned to their offence, and a florid eloquence of manner suitable to his own calling.

‘This tragedy is at once the glory and shame of the nation. Men will indeed bless the fortunate age which saw the outbreak of this miracle of art and genius, but at the same time they will always deplore the blindness and injustice, which in this same age attempted to destroy this master-piece at its birth, and forced a poet like Racine to quit the dramatic career when he was but thirty-eight years old. It was not jealous insignificant rhyme-sters who arrayed themselves against the author of *Phèdre*;—it was the circle of fashion and wit;—the gallant Racine met as enemies, not reviewers, but amiable women, and polished courtiers. Devisé and Subligne, critics by profession, showed some interest in the most perfect of French tragedies, but Madame Deshoulières, the Duchess de Bouillon, the Duke de Nevers, uncle of that duke de Nivernois who has since in this regard, reëstablished the honor of the family, and a crowd of distinguished persons of both sexes, formed a real conspiracy to humiliate talent and give a triumph to stupidity. The Duchess de Bouillon and the Duke de Nevers are perhaps least culpable, because they were strangers by birth; but how explain why Frenchmen conspired against the honor of their country;—how explain the animosity of women against a handsome man, who was the favorite of the Court and their predilection for an obscure fellow like Pradon, whose form was as ridiculous as his writings?’

‘The whole of this scandalous conflict between a dwarf and giant is a problem, an enigma: Racine’s tragedy was played three days before that of Pradon. Will not the unbroken storm of applause which such a piece deserves overwhelm this

unworthy rival? Will not public admiration of it forbid them to perform the *Phédre* of Pradon? In this great era of good taste, cannot an audience distinguish between the excellent and the miserable? The celebrated Madame de Deshoulières is present at the first representation of Racine's master piece: does not her heart feel any remorse?—She returns to sup with the conspirators and makes court to Pradon by ridiculing the sublimest passages of Racine. This sweet, interesting shepherdess, who spoke so tenderly to the lambs,—the flowers and the streams, is the fury Alecto who is distilling the venom of satire in a wretched sonnet which has been preserved to us by the man who is the object of it. To what depth will human reason not sink under the degradation of these petty passions! Instead of uniting in congratulating French literature on its precious acquisition, men of genius and intelligence were quarrelling about it in their sonnets. The duke de Nevers finished his by threats of blows with his cane, a poetical figure of very delicate taste. With what pleasure do we see the great Condé finishing this shameful combat, and prostrating all these mean spirits with his authority! A grand spectacle is this,—a great man crushing cabal and protecting genius!

We may remark *en passant*, that the title of one of the ladies mentioned in the above passage has given occasion to Madame de Staël for a very pretty *calembourg*, which is recorded in the biographical notice of her by her cousin, Madame de Necker-Saussure. Madame de Staël had in conversation spoken with some degree of favour of the arrangements in the new kingdom of Hayti. 'What then,' said some one present, 'you take great interest in the Comte de Limonade and the Marquis de Marmalade;' 'Why not,' replied Madame de Staël, 'as much as in the Duc de Bouillon?' [Duke of Broth.]

Racine effected a compromise between his conscience and his taste for poetry, when he was called upon to furnish a drama on a scripture subject, to be represented by the young ladies of the institution of St. Cyr: and if

any thing could have consoled him for the fate of *Phèdre*, the success of *Esther* would probably have been sufficient. It was the fairest triumph, says the enthusiastic Geoffroy, that ever flattered the sensibility and noble pride of a man of genius. Such a piece was not destined for a public stage and mercenary players. His theatre was a religious institution, where noble young ladies of reduced fortunes were brought up under the shadow of the altar; and these were his actors and actresses. His audience consisted of the royal family and a select party of the court. The king himself condescended to act as master of ceremonies, and stood at the door with a list of the persons invited in his hand, and conducted the ladies to the seats; between the acts he went round to collect the opinions and to give his own. Madame de Sevigné was present at one of the representations, and the king did her the honor to come and ask her how she liked the play. Party spirit itself could not resist this seduction; and the patroness and partisan of Corneille, in the intoxication of pleasure and glory, was compelled to admit that Racine had merit; but still with a qualification — ‘Racine a bien de l’esprit Sire,’ she replied, ‘mais en vérité, ces jeunes personnes en ont beaucoup aussi.’ Such was the fortune of *Esther*, and its brilliancy encouraged Racine to attempt another play on a scripture subject. ‘Le grand succès d’*Esther*,’ says Madame de Caylus, (for the Ladies at this time seem to have the literature in their own hands) a mis Racine en goût.’ Madame de Sevigné, however, despaired of his producing any thing equal to *Esther*. While he was employed upon *Athalie* she writes to her daughter, that he will find it hard to equal *Esther*, that there were no more such subjects, that it was a lucky chance, that Ruth and Judith are nothing to it; but she adds, *Racine a bien de l’esprit, il faut espérer*. This amiable Jansenist, as our critic calls her,



(we hope our fair readers know what a Jansenist is, for we have not time to explain it,) was, we fear, still a *Cornelian* at heart.

But the smiles of fortune were in this instance, as usual, deceitful and treacherous, and Racine was fated to drink still deeper the cup of bitterness—*Athalie*, which is styled by Voltaire *the boast of France, the master piece of the theatre, the master piece of poetry*, *Athalie* was destined to a still more ignominious fate than *Phèdre*. Religious scruples prevented it from being acted in public. The author had it printed, and it was left on the bookseller's hands, while the literary world pronounced it a poor piece, a cold, tiresome piece, in which there was much ado about nothing, or what was the same, about a priest and a baby. The indignant Professor having exhausted all the terms of reproach that language afforded him, in revenging the outrage upon *Phèdre*, has nothing left for *Athalie*, but a sullen dogged resignation to the decrees of Providence. Who would not think, says he, that in 1691, in the age of taste, in a city so long nourished with the choicest productions, the master piece of a poet so justly famous as Racine, when it appeared in print, and when the reading world had a full opportunity to feel all the beauties of the style, who would not think that it must have exhausted, so to speak, the public admiration? *Eh bien!* singular, extraordinary, altogether incredible as it may appear, there is no room for a doubt that the fact was directly otherwise. Yes, while at the present day we run after any thing new from a good writer with a sort of fury, Racine's *Athalie* was left on the bookseller's hands. There is a fatality then, a star for books as well as men. *Et habent sua fata libelli*. The literary world is in torment to explain this phenomenon, and their explanations are as unsatisfactory as those which our

*savans* daily give us of the secrets of nature. The fate of *Athalie* is a literary mystery: we must believe without attempting to understand it.

At another time, however, he attributes the fall of *Athalie* to a combination of the minor wits of the day, headed by Fontenelle, who was the nephew of Corneille, and of course a partizan of his sublime uncle. He is accused, it seems, with great probability, of having produced the following epigram upon *Athalie*, which it must be confessed does him no great honour, either as a man of taste or a poet; and which we may venture to hope was not written by the gallant author of the *Plurality of worlds* and the *Dialogues of the dead*.

Gentilhomme extraordinaire  
Et supposé de Lucifer  
Pour avoir fait pis qu' *Esther*  
Comment diable as-tu pu faire ?

All this was too much for the morbid feelings of the sensitive poet. To increase his troubles still more he lost the favor of the king. Somebody who had grievances to complain of persuaded Racine to write him a memorial, and upon presenting it to Louis XIV thought to strengthen his cause by telling him that the petition was drawn up by his favorite poet. The effect however was quite contrary. 'What,' said the king, 'does Racine think because he can make good poetry that he is able to teach me politics? Let me hear no more of it.' The unlucky bard was unable to support this complication of disasters, and died soon after of a broken heart. The remark of Geoffroy upon this event is truly philosophical. 'Perhaps,' says he, 'Racine was wrong to meddle with politics. Every man to his own trade; but his greatest error was in dying of chagrin.'

Such was the fate of one, whom so great a nation as

France regards as the first of poets. *Inunc et tecum versus meditare canoros.*

Molière shared in some degree the fate of Racine. His best pieces, the *Misanthrope* and the *Tartuffe*, were not much relished at the time they were written. They were too good for the audience. These two great geniuses were, like other great geniuses, in advance of their age, and their value was consequently not fully perceived till after their death. The next generation, whose taste was formed and polished by their productions, were able to do them justice, but this was too late for the authors. Notwithstanding this, Molière was extremely popular in his life time, the greater part of his pieces being of a light kind, bordering very nearly upon farce. It is well known that a great part of the merriment of these productions consists in a ridicule of the physicians. This circumstance arose from the state of public opinion in that day. Ridicule in order to be *piquant* must be directed against an object at once serious and important. Politics and religion were at that time too sacred to be touched, and medicine was the most convenient substitute. Since the poets have been permitted to laugh at priests and statesmen, they have left the physicians alone. It was however a great folly in a man so wise as Molière, to become in good earnest the dupe of his own wit, and to believe, that because he could make people in health laugh at the physicians, he should not want their assistance himself when ill. It is supposed that his death was much hastened by his neglect to take medical advice. It is also a singular coincidence, that the last attack of his illness, which was a consumption, was brought on by his exertions in acting the *Malade Imaginaire*.

Our critic does not attribute his decline solely to this circumstance, and is half disposed to think that he was

worried to death by his wife. Mademoiselle Molière (for the actresses, though married, were not at that time honoured with the title of Madame) Mademoiselle Molière was a young and handsome coquette, and cared but little for her husband, who, besides being out of health, had too much sense and too little gaiety to be very good company. Molière, like other great wits, was naturally *triste*. He was however dotingly fond of her, and though she was a perpetual torment to him, she contributed mainly to the perfection of his plays, by enabling him to paint to the life from his own sensations, the anxiety of a jealous husband.

In the *Femmes Savantes*, the learned ladies, Molière has attacked the folly which at that time possessed a part of the sex, of giving themselves out for wits and philosophers, without the least pretension to either character. The subject is well treated, and is certainly a very legitimate one for ridicule. False pretensions of any kind are fair game. Our critic, in his remarks upon the play, carries the idea a little farther, or rather introduces an entirely new one, and undertakes to show that the modern doctrines on female education are incorrect, that it is quite foolish for ladies to be running to lectures upon natural and moral philosophy, and that they would do much better to be staying at home and taking care of their children. The delicacy of this subject will prevent us from treating it in detail, although it is not to be disguised that scripture authority leans the same way. The model of wives held up to imitation is not one who is well versed in botany and metaphysics, but one that looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. We shall take the liberty of laying before our readers a part of Mr. Geoffroy's remarks upon this point.

'How can the *Femmes Savantes* be played in a city filled with museums, athenaeums, coteries, and learned clubs of every cast, where the Muses only appear to be applauded by the Graces? How can the *Femmes Savantes* be played in the metropolis of science, in the capital of the mathematics, in the central bureau of philosophy and the arts, in a city peopled with grammarians, metaphysicians, natural philosophers, chemists, and botanists, who have no more assiduous or skilful disciples than women. What would become of so many demonstrators, instructors, doctors, professors, and orators who are wholly devoted to them? Would not they be obliged to bring their courses to an end if the pretty women ceased to run after science? What a downfall to learned intimacies! What a death blow to the circulation of principles, of phrases, of sophistries and of witticisms, if the young wife, timid and alone, instead of throwing herself into a crowd of men to contest there the prize of genius and of beauty, should restrict her coquetry to please her husband, her glory to the education of her children, and her vanity to the details of housekeeping. Ah! who would make verses if the hope that women would read them did not make good the absence of genius and of Apollo. Preach simplicity and modesty to women in Paris! it is like preaching philosophy in Constantinople; liberty in Morocco, and Christianity in Japan,' &c.

It has been observed that we all bear the misfortunes of our neighbors with philosophy, and join with complacency in the laugh at their follies, but are not quite so well satisfied when the case is brought home to ourselves. Our critic goes along with Molière very good humouredly in ridiculing the physicians, the bigots, the unfortunate husbands and the learned ladies, but when the poet begins to laugh at Greek, his favorite study, he stops short. *J'aime beaucoup Molière*, says he, *et j'aime beaucoup le Grec. Je ne pardonne pas à Molière d'avoir voulu rendre le Grec ridicule.* The passage alluded to is in the *Learned Ladies*. Trissotin, the principal pedant of the play, introduces one of his friends to the ladies, and

recommends him as being well versed in the old writers : and especially in Greek, upon which the ladies express their satisfaction, by offering to embrace him.

' Il a des vieux auteurs la pleine intelligence  
Et sait du Grec, madame, autant qu' homme de France.

*Philaminte.*

Du Grec ! ô ciel, du Grec ! Il sait du Grec, ma soeur !

*Belise.*

Ah, ma nièce, du Grec !

*Amande.*

Du Grec ! quelle douceur !

*Philaminte.*

Quoi, monsieur sait du Grec ! ah, permettez, de Grâce,  
Que pour l'amour du Grec, monsieur, l'on vous embrasse !

The old Professor seems however to dwell with some satisfaction on what he calls the privilege of being embraced by the ladies for the love of Greek, which, he says, is the more comical, as the Greek scholars of the time of Molière paid but little attention to their personal appearance. He then takes occasion to tell rather a strange story, how Margaret of Scotland, wife of Louis XI, then dauphin of France, was passing through a hall in the palace, and happened to see one Alain Chartres, a great savant, lying fast asleep on the floor, having, as our critic observes, probably been studying hard all night. Although he was old, ugly, and tiresome, to a proverb, the dauphiness went up and embraced him without ceremony. The ladies were greatly scandalized and the courtiers quite furious, at seeing such a mark of preference given to an ugly old pedant, but the dauphiness justified herself very nobly ; observing that she wished to salute the lips that had given utterance to so many fine thoughts. Our Professor is so far from disapproving this proceeding, that he calls it an act of heroism. ' Ce n'était pas pour l'amour du Grec, qu'elle lui avoit donné

le baiser, mais pour l'amour de la sagesse et de la vertu ; ce qui est heroique dans une jeune princesse.' This is something like a story they tell of Milton, who was lying asleep by the wayside somewhere, when an Italian lady, that was passing in her carriage, stopped to look at him, and was so pleased with what she saw of his person, that she wrote an impromptu on his fine eyes, which she did not see. For the rest we suppose the Professors and other *savans* of the present time may go to sleep very quietly, without apprehending any similar interruption.

Critics it is sometimes thought are naturally more fond of censure than of praise, and our author makes up for the liberal encomiums he bestows upon the three writers we have been considering, by abusing as liberally almost every body else, and more especially Voltaire, who is made to bear the blame of every thing that has gone wrong for the last thirty or forty years. Voltaire is the only dramatic writer since the age of Louis XIV, whose productions have fairly taken rank with those of the great poets of that time, and acquired an established and classical reputation. Now and then a single play has been acted with success, or a writer has obtained for a time a certain degree of vogue, as Ducis, Laharpe, Chénier, and some others, but no name except Voltaire can be cited, which makes pretensions to stand on a line with Corneille and Racine. His comedies have not much merit. They are regarded as the least valuable of his writings, and this is the more remarkable, as gaiety and wit seem to be among the most prominent traits of his character. The merit of his tragedies is admitted by our critic, though in rather an ungracious way.

'I never said that those of Voltaire's pieces which are still upon the stage were bad tragedies, that is an absurdity which has been falsely ascribed to me. If I must here silence such calumnies by a frank confession of my faith, I am ready to

acknowledge that I place *Merope*, *Zaire*, *Mahomet* and *Alzire* in the class of the best works written since Racine. These seem to me the four master pieces of Voltaire. In these pieces there are some striking characters, some pathetic situations, some very eloquent declamation, some admirable epigrams, and some very fine verses. Some of his other tragedies, such as *Oedipe*, *Mariamne*, and *Brutus*, without so much stage effect, are remarkable for a pure and correct style, for a regularity of movement, an elegance often worthy of Racine, and grandeur which sometimes approaches that of Corneille. Some other pieces, such as *Semiramis*, *the Orphan of China*, *Tancrède*, *Rome preserved*, and *Orestes* although inferior to these, still offer a great number of passages and scenes which display a very remarkable and peculiar talent. This has always been my opinion of Voltaire's dramas. In the criticisms which I have at times published of many of his pieces I have said next to nothing of their beauties, because these have been admired and trumpeted already even beyond their deserts.

This is about the only passage in which the critic condescends to bestow any thing like praise upon the patriarch of the philosophical church, with the exception perhaps of the following, which we rather think gives a pretty correct, though not very flattering likeness of this celebrated person.

'In fact the letters of Voltaire are worth much more than his comedies or even than his tragedies. Voltaire *en déshabillé* pleases me more than Voltaire dressed for the play. In his letters he is peculiarly himself. His intellect, which detested every kind of shackles, then developes itself at its pleasure. There he is lively, easy, sparkling, playful or silly; a prophet who takes every different appearance, a coquette who changes the expression of her face every moment. He turns a hundred ways to flatter and to please. The serpent who seduced Eve was not more beautiful or more spiteful. His sallies, caprices, oddities and contradictions combine in forms which are always natural, always varied, always amusing. His passionate temper, his coarseness and his fanaticism are his only disagreeable traits.



When he writes to people of his own clique, to his philosophical children, he has the tone of a reformed soldier who is conspiring in a drinking shop. He is the finished gentleman with men of the world, who takes no pains to show his good manners with his servants.

‘Voltaire was not born for serious effort. In tragedy he seemed out of his element, a charlatan declaimer, because he himself was the very first to ridicule his own pathos. He only sought to dazzle and mislead the vulgar by mournful farces. We know how he made a business of this. He succeeded, because with talent, one can do anything tolerably well, and because he had no rivals in this career but poor devils who were not so cunning as he was. But in all his graceful or his playful writings, in his fugitive pieces, in his little pamphlets, in his little Romances, in his jokes, his puns, and above all in his letters he is a divine man ; it is Voltaire in his natural and true temper, who is found there ; — there he is original, there he has a physiognomy, a character and speaks from the heart. Everywhere else his bearing is strained and false. He is a hypocrite who arranges his appearance because he is observed.

‘I owe him this little eulogy for the pleasure and even for the profit which I have gained from his letters. I discover in them the secret of his writings ; I see how he worked upon his tragedies and what he thought of them himself. In spite of his vanity he has some moments of justice when he appreciates himself at his true value. His letters are like the wings of the stage and the green room. They show to me the petty intrigues, of which the crowd does not know, because they are only permitted to see the scenes in front, and that at a sufficient distance.

‘As soon as Voltaire had chosen a subject for a tragedy, incapable of maturing it, he rapidly minuted the scenes on paper as they suggested themselves to his heated imagination : the work was hastened and the tragedy was usually finished in three weeks or six months. He then sent this sketch to his *angels*, that is to the Comte d’Argental, and more often to the Countess whom he called Madam Scaliger, on account of the long comments which she furnished on the impromptus and the tragic

*prestes* which he offered to her criticism : if their remarks seemed just, he altered, retouched or reformed ; generally willing enough to put, as he said, one folly in the place of another ; sometimes he was obstinate, he was wise enough not to try to do better than he could.

‘ Often of his own accord he altered his original design ; he changed whole acts, or made new speeches ; this labor was much longer than that of the first composition ; at last when he had satisfied his privy council and himself he turned to the representation, and this was a source of profound combinations : the affairs of a great empire are not discussed with more gravity in a sovereign’s cabinet than all the minutiae which related to the *tripot* (for so Voltaire called la comédie Française) were arranged in counsel with Madame Scaliger ; everything was foreseen, arranged and calculated ; but the poor tragedy, even before it was played, had been so often patched and botched that it was only a mass of threads and pieces.

‘ Thus were composed, thus arranged, these pretended prodigies of poetry and philosophy, destined to subjugate the first nation in the universe ; these master pieces which have long been consecrated by a blind admiration. I am revealing here some astounding mysteries to the profane ; great effects from little causes ; but Voltaire must have the justice which he deserves ; he laughed in his soul at his turns of jugglery ; he knew men and despised them ; he knew what a people required and rarely deceived himself in his hopes of deceiving others.’

We have extracted this account of the process employed by Voltaire in the composition of his tragedies, rather for the curiosity of the facts, than because we agree with Geoffroy in the unfavourable opinion he entertains of it. We are inclined to think that it is the same in substance with the method employed by other good writers. Alfieri has given in his memoirs a very similar description of his own method, with the exception that his rough sketch was made in prose.

*Zaïre* is the most generally popular of Voltaire’s tragedies, and the one that has found most favour in the eyes

of our austere critic. He even goes the length of saying, that the three last acts may be called a master-piece. The hint is taken from the *Othello* of Shakspeare, and the catastrophe is the same. Orosmane is the Moor of Venice with the title and dress of a Sultan of Jerusalem, and the gallantry of a courtier of the age of Louis XIV. Instead of the Egyptian handkerchief, Voltaire has substituted an intercepted letter from a brother whom Zaïre unexpectedly discovered in a christian slave, the very day of her intended marriage with the Sultan, and Geoffroy finds great fault with the Sultan for not showing this letter to Zaïre and demanding an explanation, instead of regarding it as conclusive evidence against her, and proceeding accordingly. But how often do the heroes of poetry and romance conduct themselves upon principles entirely opposed to the ordinary maxims of common prudence! How many of these agreeable productions would be brought to a close before the end of the first volume or the first act, if, as our author correctly observes himself, in a passage quoted above, the lovers had not taken an oath not to come to an explanation, lest the piece should finish too soon.

*Mahomet* is another of the most popular tragedies of the philosophical patriarch. It was thought dangerous upon its first appearance and was withdrawn after three representations, and a considerable outcry was raised against it by a part of the public. There is nothing in it that could be directly offensive, but it was regarded as a disguised attack upon all positive religions, and there are many passages which, though applied in the play to Mahometism, are couched in general terms and were supposed to be intended for Christianity. To silence all doubt upon this head, Voltaire determined that his piece should come before the public in print, with the approbation of the head of the church. For this purpose he

addressed a polite letter to Pope Benedict XIV, requesting permission to dedicate the tragedy to him, and to make the request more palatable, he accompanied it by a Latin distich, which he wrote for the portrait of the Pope who was himself an author of no great note, and whose name was Lambertini.

Lambertinus hic est Romæ decus et pater orbis;  
Qui mundum scriptis docuit, virtutibus ornat.

The letter of dedication is certainly a curiosity. It was written in Italian, and the following is given by Geoffroy as a literal translation.

‘Tres bien heureux Père,

‘Votre saintété me pardonnera la liberté que prend un des moindres fidèles, mais un des plus grands admirateurs de la vertu, de soumettre au chef de la vraie religion cet ouvrage contre le fondateur d’une secte fausse et barbare.

‘A qui pourrais je dedier plus convenablement la satire de la cruauté et des erreurs d’un faux prophète qu’au vicaire et à l’imitateur d’un dieu de vérité et de douceur ?

‘Que votre saintété m’accorde donc la permission de mettre à ses pieds le livre et l’auteur, et de demander humblement sa protection pour l’un et sa benediction pour l’autre. Je m’incline très profondément devant elle, et ja baise ses pieds sacrés.’

Voltaire at the Pope’s feet is a pleasant caricature. The old Pontiff however took the request in very good part, was flattered by the attention of so distinguished a writer, and by the compliment of his distich, and accepted the dedication in a very polite answer, to which Voltaire replied with more flattery. The whole correspondence is printed in his works as an introduction to *Mahomet*. For this and other reasons the play, when it was brought out again some years after, was received with great applause: and still maintains its place among the most popular tragedies.

*La mort de César* is borrowed in part from Shakspeare's Julius Cæsar, but is not a favourite piece. Our stoical professor, notwithstanding the austerity of his principles, makes no scruple to avail himself of every good opportunity to offer incense to Napoleon, the reigning idol of the day. The reader will have observed some instances of this in the passages we have extracted, and his remarks upon this play plainly tend to the same object. He takes occasion to bestow the highest commendations on the character of Julius Cesar, as the leader of the popular party, and the avenger of their wrongs upon a tyrannical aristocracy. Brutus and Cassius are no better than fanatical assassins, and are accountable for all the troubles and miseries that ensued upon the death of Julius. There is a foundation of truth in these ideas, especially in regard to the merits of the disputes between the Patricians and the Plebeians. It is admitted by the best critical inquirers, that the account of these matters by Livy is partial, and that the right was generally with the Plebeians, especially in the commencement of these quarrels. But the parties stood on entirely different ground in the time of Cesar, and were it otherwise, his conduct would not be the more justifiable. His prodigious powers and various accomplishments are undeniable, but like Napoleon he had no sentiment of true greatness. It is equally clear, however, that the enterprize of Brutus and Cassius, though made with upright intentions, was ill contrived and worse executed, and productive in the end of much evil and no good. The reader may perhaps be amused by the adroit flattery of Bonaparte in the following remarks, in which, after all, the author was probably pretty honest. The arrival of Bonaparte at the helm of state was generally viewed at first as a favourable event, and was so regarded, we believe, by some of our own politicians, who have since

professed the strongest opposition to his proceedings and character.

'Patriotism in an honest and virtuous heart is the noblest of sentiments, but patriotism never commanded a crime. Montesquieu has spoken in a loose and partial manner of the conduct of Brutus. Without praising or blaming it very distinctly, he attempts to justify it to a certain degree. He mentions an old prejudice of the Grecian republics, admitted as a law at Rome, which made it the duty of every citizen to put to death any usurper of the sovereign power. *He does not mention that the real usurpers of the sovereign power were the senators themselves, and that they circulated this idea in order to make use of it against the good citizens, like the Gracchi, who attempted to restore the laws and liberty.* He does not tell us that Scylla, a far more cruel tyrant than Cesar, was praised and honored because he was at the head of the Patrician faction; and that Cesar, the kindest and most generous of men, fell a victim to the pride of the senate because he was at the head of the popular party, and had put an end to the Patrician tyranny, which had so long crushed the nation. Finally, Montesquieu does not tell us that in a frightful chaos, where no law is acknowledged but force, *the chief who establishes order under a legitimate title conferred on him by the people, is not the usurper of the sovereign power, but the benefactor of his country and the restorer of the republic.* Montesquieu had sufficient acquaintance with the history of Rome to perceive these truths, but he knew the spirit of his time too well to publish them.

'The first Brutus immortalized himself by creating the Roman republic, as Cesar did by destroying it, and erecting on its ruins the Roman empire. Liberty had no part in the operations of these men. Ambition did all; and Brutus, the founder of the republic, was far more haughty, imperious, and tyrannical, than Cesar the founder of the empire. From the expulsion of the Tarquins till the establishment of the tribunes, and even till the enacting of the Licinian law, the Roman people, that is the whole Plebeian class, was in a state of slavery more abject than that of the populace of Constantinople and Ispahan at the present day. They relapsed into the same state after the murder of the Grac-

chi, and only recovered their liberty under the dictatorship of Julius Cesar, the leader of the popular party, who subdued the pride of the senate on the plains of Pharsalia, crushed the factions, and put an end to anarchy. These were his crimes, and for these he was assassinated by the hands of senators in the midst of the senate.

‘This then was a bad subject for a tragedy, since Cesar, the deliverer, the benefactor of his country, is falsely represented as a usurper, as the destroyer of liberty, and the interest is attached to a horde of banditti called senators, who, under the vain pretext of patriotism and liberty, are cowardly enough to assassinate a man, who had given them their lives on the field of battle.’

This was written in 1806. The play was always interpreted during the revolution in a sense very favourable to popular principles, and contributed its share in producing the excitement of that period. It was frequently represented twice the same evening, and by the same actors.

After the time of Voltaire, the French theatre presents but little interest. The astonishing success of the *Mariage de Figaro* is, however, a curious occurrence in political as well as literary history, and exhibits in a very remarkable manner the state of public feeling in France, just before the revolution. The piece is nothing more than a long farce in five acts, intended to ridicule the aristocracy of Europe. The author, whose name will live in the journals of our congress if no where else, had acquired a great ephemeral celebrity, by certain political writings connected with the affairs of the day. The piece was read in private circles with much approbation, but the court refused for some time to allow it to be acted. Our Professor relates the circumstances with much apparent gravity; one would suppose that some important political measure was in agitation.

'The King while pressed by all parties still made some resistance—public opinion favored it—his conscience struggled with his desire for popularity. He one day allowed permission to be extorted from him to have this famous work brought forward at the theatre des Menus. The French comedians are at once in full operation—Paris is all rumor. The news of the victory of Devain at a former period had caused less intoxication. People disputed—they snatched tickets of entrance from each other. Early in the morning the carriages were defiling with great noise, but oh, grief at eleven o'clock an order from the minister forbade the representation, a general mourning succeeded to the joy, the carriages turned sadly back at a slow pace, and the horses with bent down heads and sad eyes seemed to share the grief of their masters.

'The irresolution of the feeble monarch wavering between good sense and philosophy lasted for a considerable time, there was a continued circle of permissions, revoked as soon as granted. *Beaumarchais* without being repulsed pressed the siege with indefatigable ardor. Finally philosophy triumphed, it was in the order of destiny that the ancient monarchy should be destroyed, and that the *reins of the French empire should be placed in more firm and safe hands*. By force of importunity, perseverance and intrigue, *Beaumarchais* drew from the government permission to ridicule it. It was necessary either never to grant or never to refuse. All governments perish from weakness rather than tyranny.

'Finally *Figaro* was granted to the public curiosity and impatience. Never was representation more tumultuous and more noisy. Many amateurs slept the night previous at the theatre in the apartments of the actors, that they might be certain to find places the next day. The annals of the theatre offer no example of a success so prodigious and so constant. The piece had a hundred successive representations followed up with the most extraordinary zeal. The public seemed never to tire of this farce, a true thermometer of the taste which prevailed at the time. It was worth five hundred thousand francs to the comedians, and eighty thousand francs to the author.



'But fortune took pleasure in elevating Beaumarchais so highly, only to betray him the more cruelly. The government had shown itself so weak, so indulgent, so blind towards him only to display afterwards to him an unreasonable rigor at the very moment of his triumph. Beaumarchais was arrested and sent to the house of correction of Saint Lazarus, as a young libertine. He was then fifty years old and might have been regarded as incorrigible. The first day people laughed at this stroke of authority, the second day they asked the reason of it, the third day they discussed the matter and began to pity the prisoner, the fourth it was discovered that by a fit of inconstancy as singular as all the rest, the government had restored Beaumarchais to liberty. The representation of Figaro being then suspended in consequence of the indisposition of an actor, it appeared that the government had taken on itself the office of giving the comedy to the public.'

The last of the volumes is occupied by remarks upon contemporary writers. We have no room for further extracts, and if we had, our readers would probably take no great interest in poets, whose names and works are never heard of out of France, and hardly within it. Some of the judgments of our author upon the literature of other nations, particularly England and Germany, would perhaps contribute more to their amusement, and we had intended to extract a part of his observations upon Shakspeare, but the length to which this article has already extended makes it necessary for us to omit them, and hasten at once to a close.

## PRIVATE LIFE OF VOLTAIRE.\*

[North American Review, January, 1821.]

THE letters, which compose the greater part of this work, were written by Madame de Graffigny during a visit of six months at the Château of Cirey, the residence of the Marquis and Marchioness du Châtelet, and where Voltaire was also at the same time a guest. The name of the writer is not much known in the literary world, and she published nothing in her life time but the 'Peruvian Letters,' a work which we have not had the pleasure of inspecting, but which we understand, belongs to the class of sentimental novels, and enjoys a pretty high reputation in the boarding schools. The present series of letters is also a sort of romance, though a narrative of real events; and to our taste even more interesting than the sorrows of the tender Zilia in the novel just mentioned, as far as we can form a conjecture in regard to the latter. The story of this little romance of real life is briefly the following. Madame de Graffigny had long been inflamed with an eager desire to make the acquaintance of Voltaire, under the influence of the common delusion, that the conversation and social habits of a distinguished author must be as agreeable as his writings. Her wishes

\* *Vie Privée de Voltaire et de Madame du Châtelet pendant un séjour de six mois à Cirey; par l'auteur des Lettres Peruviennes, suivie de cinquante lettres inédites, en vers et en prose, de Voltaire.* 1 vol. 8vo, Paris, 1820.

had long been frustrated by the same cause which now prevents our worthy countryman, Captain Symmes, from exploring the interior of the earth through the opening which he has discovered at the North Pole; 'the want of disposable means.' Chill penury had for a long time repressed her noble rage, for Madame de Graffigny, though rich in sentiment and even familiar in the best society, in regard to funds was poor indeed, as we shall see hereafter. By great good luck, while she was on a visit at the residence of one of her friends, which she pleasantly denominates the *Château de l'Ennui*, another of the number arrived on a visit with her own equipage. An opening was thus made for Madame de Graffigny to take her projected journey free of expense, of which she availed herself at once. 'The first compliment I made her,' says our author, 'was to ask the loan of her horses, which was granted,' and the next morning she commenced her expedition at sunrise, and proceeded very prosperously till half past one o'clock. Thus far every thing went well, but at that time, for reasons not sufficiently explained, the coachman refused to go any farther, our sentimental traveller was obliged to resort to the post, and after floundering along dismally over the most detestable roads, and wallowing half the way on foot through the mire to avoid being overset, she arrived at last at Cirey, at two o'clock at night, having spent her last *sol* upon her horses and postillions. *Il ne me restait pas ce qu'on appelle un sol.* Two o'clock at night would be rather an unpropitious hour in ordinary cases to arrive at a friend's house in the country upon a visit; but the inhabitants of Cirey kept no ordinary hours, as we shall see. They were all up and doing. The Nymph and the Idol, as she ingeniously styles Madame du Châtelet and Voltaire, were each hard at study, in their respective cabinets. She first paid her respects to the former and

then repaired to her own apartment, where the Idol immediately came up to see her, and received her with great kindness. 'Your idol came up a moment after, holding a little candle in his hand, like a monk. He lavished a thousand caresses upon me, and the expressions of his joy at seeing me were quite extravagant. He kissed my hand ten times, and inquired after my health with an air of the most touching interest.'

Such is the opening of the little sentimental drama we are reviewing, all flowers and sunshine. Madame de Graffigny approached the shrine of her Idol with the same enthusiasm that our young travelling scholars now feel, when they are admitted to an interview with Lord Byron, or Sir Walter Scott; and for eight or ten days, all went on very well. The conversation is delightful, the suppers are divine, and the manuscripts they give her to read irresistible. Voltaire is always charming, always attentive. She sees that he is afraid she shall be *ennuyée*, but he is much in the wrong. *Ennuyée* in the same house with Voltaire, impossible! She has not even leisure to remember that there is such a thing as *ennui* in the world. She is as hearty as the Pont Neuf, and as busy as a mouse, and she sleeps like a child. The Nymph is indeed a little cold, but she soon grows familiar. Our author cannot help laughing in her sleeve, at their ridiculous fanaticism about Newton and geometry, but upon the whole she finds them the most agreeable companions, and Cirey quite an enchanted castle.

This fine weather lasts unfortunately but a little time, and it is soon pretty evident from the style of the letters that a storm is gathering. The inmates of Cirey, like most other persons of genius, or in other words of keen sensibility, were humorous and susceptible, and they speedily took mortal offence at a proceeding on the part of Madame de Graffigny, which, taking her own account

of it to be true, appears to have been really very innocent. Voltaire employed himself occasionally at this period of his life in writing cantos of a Poem, called the Maid of Orleans, which he used to read in private to his particular friends, but had pretty good reasons for keeping entirely from public view. Madame de Graffigny was treated with a hearing of one of these precious compositions; and about the same time or soon after intelligence was conveyed to the Idol, that copies of the same canto were in circulation at Luneville, the residence of the correspondent of Madame de Graffigny. For the better understanding of the grounds of this quarrel, it may be proper to observe, that the inmates of Ciry were in the laudable practice of opening all the letters that passed to and from their guests. Having found in one addressed to Madame de Graffigny by her correspondent the following phrase, *Le chant de Jeanne est charmant*, they naturally enough put the two circumstances together, and concluded that she had taken a copy of it by some underhand means and sent it to her correspondent, who, we may remark *en passant* was Mr. Deveaux, reader to the Ex-King of Poland, Stanislaus Leczinski, then resident at Luneville. In her sportive moments she gives him the polite and endearing title of *great dog*. Madame de Graffigny confidently maintains in her letters her innocence of the charge in question, declaring that she had only made some remarks upon the plan of the canto, and that in the phrase above cited, the word *plan* should have been used instead of *chant*. As these letters are private communications to the very persons to whom the canto was supposed to be sent, her justification is certainly plausible. But with all our respect for the delicate feelings of this very sentimental person, we must be permitted to remark, that under all the circumstances, and with the same means of information possessed by the Nymph

and Idol, we should hardly have hesitated in drawing the same conclusion; and we are even not without some suspicions that the charge was substantially true.

Be that as it may, the discovery of this offence, real or pretended, was followed by a terrible explosion; and from this moment the face of things at the castle changes entirely for Madame de Graffigny; no more charming conversations, no more divine suppers, no more delicious manuscripts. Her eyes grow dim with weeping; she is attacked by the vapours; and this residence, where the name of Ennui was never heard of before, is now the dullest spot in the world. *C'est l'endroit du monde le moins divertissant.* The very resource of her ordinary friendly and confidential correspondence with *Great Dog* fails her; since she finds that her letters are regularly opened. But how to get away without a *sol* in her pocket? This last difficulty aggravates all the rest. She worries along in blank sadness and continual tears two or three months, till at length an intimate friend, having, it would seem, some pretensions to a nearer title, makes his appearance, ostensibly to relieve the distressed damsel from her tedious thralldom. His presence revives her hopes, restores her health and eyes, drives off the vapours, and gives the castle and her correspondence all its former gaiety. But this is only a prelude to the last and that the unkindest cut of all. The correspondence terminates abruptly by a short letter, in which the broken hearted fair-one informs her friend, that the supposed lover had made her the tender avowal of his complete indifference, and we are even left entirely in the dark about the manner, in which she found her way back to Paris. Thither however she went, and not long after published the *Peruvian Letters*. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. The Editor intimates that the disastrous catastrophe we have just mentioned suggested the plan

of this, we doubt not, very instructive work; the writer having depicted her own feelings in those of the tender and desolate Zilia, and represented her cruel and perfidious lover under the character of the false hearted Aza; with what success we must leave it to the fair readers of their history to judge.

Such, if we may be allowed to moralize a little on a subject of this importance, is the ordinary course of things on a small scale, as well as on a great one. When delusive dreams and exaggerated hopes lead the van, disappointment early and complete is pretty sure to bring up the rear. But we confess that we have hardly seen, within so small a compass of time, place and action, so entire a change of views upon the same subject; and we have derived no small amusement from comparing the opposite judgments that are delivered at different periods, according to the prevailing disposition of the writer, upon the character of Voltaire. This is sufficiently illustrated in what we have already said of the rapid change in the opinions which Madame de Graffigny entertains and expresses, in the course of a few letters; and will still farther appear from the extracts which we shall lay before our readers in the course of this article. The most valuable part however of the work is the notices it contains of the manners and pursuits of the principal personages.

The following description of Voltaire's apartments and mode of life at Cirey will perhaps afford amusement to our readers.

‘I wrote you yesterday till supper; I was called to supper and conducted to an apartment which I recognized immediately for that of Voltaire. He came to receive me; nobody else had arrived, and yet I had no time even to cast a glance around, for we went immediately to table. Here I was quite happy; but I

should not have been so much so as I ought, if I had not compared this supper with that of the preceding evening. What a thing life is! Yesterday in the darkness and mud, and to day on enchanted ground! So that I seasoned my supper both with what was within me and without me. But of what did we talk? Of poetry, sciences and arts, and all in a tone of *badinage* and good breeding. I would fain transmit to you this charming, this enchanting conversation, but that is beyond me. The supper was not abundant, but well chosen, neat and delicate, with a great service of plate. Opposite to me were five globes, and an apparatus for natural philosophy, for we supped in the little gallery. Voltaire was at my side as polite and attentive as he is amiable and learned. M. du Châtelet was on the other side of me; this is my regular place, in virtue of which my left ear is sweetly charmed, while the right is ennuyée very slightly, for he speaks little and retires when the meal is finished. With the desert are introduced perfumes, and a conversation as agreeable as instructive ensues. They talked volumes, as you may suppose. There was mention made of Rousseau [Jean Baptiste.] It is there that he shows himself but man after all. He is capable of being irreconcilably offended with any one who should praise Rousseau. At last they talked of poems of all sorts. "As for that," said the lady, "I cannot bear odes." "Fie," said the Idol, "what is an ode? It is the smallest merit in the world to make one. Galimatias, rhapsodies, and above all, this in the *marotic* style, the most detestable thing in the world. I cannot conceive how decent people can read such things."

' Voltaire is always so charming and so devoted to my amusement! His attention is never exhausted. You can see that he fears I shall be ennuyée, but he is wrong. To be ennuyée near Voltaire! Heavens, this is not possible. I have not even leisure to think that there is such a thing as ennui in the world. So I am as hearty as the Pont Neuf and as gay as a mouse; whether from eating less or having my mind strongly and agreeably excited, I know not. I cannot explain it, but so it is, that I sleep like a child. In a word, I feel by an experience before almost unknown to me, that pleasant occupation is the moving spring of life. To relish it the better I sometimes make comparisons



of time. The lady, at first rather cold, becomes courteous by degrees, and we end by joking each other. She is in truth admirable in her duties and her judgments. I wait a longer acquaintance to describe her to you; and I will do the same with respect to Voltaire, for I have learned to beware of prepossession. It is for instance a great pleasure to me to laugh in my sleeve at their *fanaticism* about Newton, and to hear people of so much sense talking nonsense from the power of prejudice. I enter into no disputes, as you will readily believe, but I take advantage of these things for the knowledge of the heart, and I endeavour to abstain from being prepossessed or prejudiced for or against any sentiment, even that of friendship. I have but too firmly resolved but to give my love to you, and to seek nothing but passing amusement elsewhere. This is my profession of faith, which I renew every day. For the rest you can write me at your ease. One pays no postage here. Is not this civil? I should be glad if they also franked the letters which are written from here. Adieu, my friend, for to-night.

Between half past ten and half past eleven every body is called to coffee. This is taken in Voltaire's gallery. I have written you from day to day an account of the conversations here. This lasts till noon, an hour more or less, as the company has assembled earlier or later. At twelve o'clock, *the coachmen*, as they are called, dine; these coachmen are no other than M. du Châtelet, the fat lady and her son, who never appears but to copy. We remain a half an hour, Voltaire, the lady and I; he then makes us a low bow and dismisses us. Each one then goes to his chamber. At four o'clock there is occasionally a luncheon, at which the family meets again. I seldom go except called, which is not always. At nine o'clock we sup and remain together till midnight. Heavens, what suppers; it is always that of Damocles; all the pleasures are combined, but alas how short the time is. How just is the comparison; nothing is wanting, not even the sword which is represented in the swift flight of time! M. du Châtelet sits down, eats nothing, sleeps, of course says nothing, and goes out with the covers. To be much alone, and then to have good company is the life I would choose, nor is it without its charms. The brother [M. du Bre-

teuil, the brother of Madame du Châtelet] is very amiable, pleasant and sensible. He is going away on Friday. Yesterday after supper there was a charming scene. Voltaire was vexed that the lady would not let him drink a glass of Rhenish wine; he refused to read Joan to us as he had promised, and was in the highest degree of ill humour. The brother and myself by dint of pleasantries succeeded in bringing him to himself; the lady who had also been pouting, could not hold out, and the whole became a scene of the most delightful pleasantries, which lasted a great while, and was equal to the canto of Joan, with which it ended. I have not found it so very pretty, though I laughed at passages.'

The following passage, written after the quarrel, is in a different tone. It gives an account of the manner in which Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet pursued their studies. It will be seen, as we observed before, that they kept no common hours, especially the lady.

'Speaking of *works*, I will tell you how much they study. She passes the night almost invariably, till five or six o'clock in the morning at study. She keeps in her chamber the son of the fat lady, an honest Israelite whom she employs as copyist, but who does not understand a word of her writing. You think, I suppose, that after this she ought to sleep till three o'clock in the afternoon. Not at all. She rises at nine or ten o'clock in the morning, and at six when she has gone to bed at four o'clock, which she calls going to bed at cock crowing. In a word, she sleeps but two hours a day, and leaves her desk in the whole twenty-four hours only at breakfast, which lasts an hour, and during supper and the hour after. Sometimes she eats a morsel at five in the afternoon, but it is at her desk, and that rarely.

'On the other hand, when Voltaire undertakes to leave his work for half a quarter of an hour, in the course of the day, to visit me and the fat lady, he never sits. "What a frightful thing it is," he says, "the time that is lost in talking; that one ought not to lose a moment; that the greatest extravagance is spending time." This is the strain, year in and year out. At the

hour of supper he is still at his desk; supper half done, he quits it, and you must lay hands upon him to keep him from going back to it, the moment he has supped. He puts himself on duty to tell a few pleasant stories during supper; but it is easy to see that it is from mere politeness, and that his mind is far away. This is the mode of life since the departure of Madame's brother, who, by the way, was here but eight days. Do you find this a pleasant sort of life; was not I right in saying to the little saint: *Vivent les sots*? Besides, Voltaire is the most unhappy man alive. He knows his reputation, and praise is a matter of indifference to him. But for the same reason, a word from his enemies drives him crazy. He can think of nothing else, and it fills him with bitterness. I cannot give you an idea of this folly, but by assuring you that it is more powerful and wretched, than his talents are vast and comprehensive. Add to this, that he is subject to the *vapours*, of which he will not hear a word, which are caused by his jealousies, good man, and then he thinks he is at the point of death. He is constantly physicking, and has got a whim into his head, that abstinence is necessary, and so he is dying with hunger. Judge of the happiness of these people, whom we consider to have arrived at the summit of felicity. The quarrels, of which I told you at the beginning, are going on; judge again. This grieves me, because I feel the worth of all his good qualities, and because he really deserves to be happier. I would gladly tell him all I think of this, but dare not.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever may have been the nature of the connexion between Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet, which we believe is not entirely made out in the scandalous chronicle, but which there is too much reason to suppose from the prevailing manners of the time was not perfectly Platonic, she appears to have exercised a very considerable empire over his mind. This may have resulted in part from the ascendancy of her high rank and titles. There are some amusing anecdotes of their little domestic differences, which are generally in rather too gossiping

a style to suit the gravity of our work. The following, however, may serve as a specimen.

'I too went to bed, for it was half past one in the morning. Good morning, my friend, you see that my first thought is for you, so you may come into our circle. Enter Voltaire;—the *lady* takes a fancy to make him put on another coat,—to be sure his was not handsome but he was well powdered and wore fine lace. He made a great many good excuses for not changing it, that he should be chilled and that he took cold with a mere trifle;—finally was civil enough to send for his valet de chambre to bring him a coat;—and could not find him at the moment;—and thought that would be an excuse. Not at all, the persecution begins again, Voltaire becomes excited,—he talks loudly to her in English, and leaves his room;—a moment after they send a message for him, he replies that he has the colic;—and so Merope goes to the devil. I was indignant; the *lady* begged me to read aloud the dialogues of M. Algarotti, I read, and laughed like morning. At last there arrived a gentleman from the neighborhood; I rose saying I was going to find Voltaire; the lady told me to try to bring him back with me. I found him with the lady who is here, who, by the way, seems to me to be his *confidante*; he was in very good humour, seeming to forget that he had the colic. We talked there for a moment, when the *lady* came to call us;—after a while he came back with us; and then though he had just been laughing with us changed his tone as he came into the room, making a pretext of the colic;—settled himself in the corner and did not say a word. Some time after the Seigneur Châtelet went out, the pouters then talked in English, and a moment after Merope appeared upon the stage. This is the first evidence of love that I have seen, for they both behave with a wonderful decency, but she leads him a pretty hard life. I only tell you these long details that you may precisely understand their bearing towards each other.

'Then he read two acts of *Merope*; I wept at the first act: there are fine verses and sentiments throughout, but the elaborated scenes are failures; he generally fails in them. I will say no more because I have not heard the whole. After this

reading the lady and I disputed about the piece until supper; she does not like it and ridicules it as much as she can. This did not please Voltaire much, but he was like a patient, and did not dare to interfere with our discussion. I was disputing on your ground: for she maintained that one could not be touched unless his reason was convinced, while I was maintaining that the feelings must be excited of themselves. I said nothing but what I have heard you say, and what you have taught me so well to feel. The author was so much afraid that she would quarrel with him again that the little he said was in opposition to me, while he agreed with me at the same time, that it was almost impossible to make the changes which she required. The supper was like a supper at Luneville; — we all exerted ourselves to talk and nobody said a word. After supper we looked at the globe; or rather Voltaire, the fat lady and I did; for the charming Nymph said nothing, she pretended to be asleep.'

The ruling passion of the fair Emily was the love of geometry, and she thought that no other study was worth pursuing. She tried to persuade Voltaire not to write poetry, and made him publish a work upon the Newtonian philosophy, which was the principal means of first introducing it into France. He was employed at this time upon the *Age of Louis XIV*, but it found no favor in the eyes of the Nymph, and she actually took the manuscript from him and locked it up in her own desk, refusing to let him finish it under pretence, that there was no use in writing a work, which could not be printed when it was done. Partly from personal jealousy and partly from a fear that he would commit himself by imprudent publications, his motions were all so narrowly observed by her, that he could not move from one apartment in the house to another, without having a servant sent after him to call him back. *Never man*, says Madame de Graffigny, *was so strictly watched or enjoyed so little liberty*. The following anecdote will give an idea of this sort of *surveillance*.

Voltaire was writing a reply to some attack that had been made upon him, which the Nymph did not think it prudent for him to publish, and which he was of course obliged to keep out of her sight and knowledge. Maupertuis, the philosopher, being on a visit there at the time, Voltaire watched his opportunity one day when he thought Madame du Châtelet entirely occupied with lines and angles, and sent for Madame de Graffigny, thinking to indulge himself by reading to her in private a portion of his defence. Before he could finish the first sentence, says our sentimental Peruvian, Madame du Châtelet appeared at the door, her eyes flashing and her countenance pale with anger. After a moment of mutual silence and embarrassment, she said to me, 'Madame, with your permission I wish to speak to *Monsieur*.' I pretended not to hear her, and kept my seat. Voltaire then took courage and addressed her thus, '*Eh bien ! oui !* I am reading something to Madame ; is there any crime in that ?' She attempted to restrain her rage, and began to criticise and find fault with the work. Voltaire replied, and the dispute was growing warm, when the lady, unable to contain herself, went out in a fury.

Madame du Châtelet, with all her activity and perseverance, seems to have brought but little to pass. It was charitably said of her by one of her intimate female friends, that *smoke without fire was the emblem of her character*. Her commentaries on Newton are, we believe, but little valued, and she is now remembered only by the place she holds in the history of the life of Voltaire.

The private habits of these persons are detailed in an amusing way in a letter from Madame de Stäel, née de Launey, to Madame du Deffand, published with this collection. The following passages are extracts :

'Madame du Châtelet and Voltaire who had been expected to-day, and whom we had lost sight of, appeared last night at midnight like two spectres ; with an odor of embalmed bodies which they seemed to have brought with them from the tombs. We were just rising from supper ; but they were furnished spectres and a supper was to be provided for them, and, which was more, beds, which were not ready. The housekeeper who was already asleep rose in great haste. *Gaya* had offered his room for pressing emergencies, and in this he was compelled to surrender it ; he removed with as much precipitation and indignation as an army surprised in camp, leaving a part of his baggage in possession of the enemy. Voltaire was very well satisfied with his quarters, but this did not console *Gaya* in the least. The lady was not satisfied with her bed, and we are obliged to remove her to day. Observe that for want of servants she has made this bed herself, and discovered a defect in the mattress, which I believe wounded her acute perceptions more than her delicate body. In the interim she is in a room which is promised to some one else, and she will leave it on Friday for that of the Marshal de Maillebois who is going one of these days.

'Our spectres do not show themselves at all in the day time. They appeared yesterday about ten o'clock in the evening :—he is describing exploits, she commenting on Newton. They neither choose to play or walk ; and are mere cyphers in a circle where their learned writings are not cared for. What is worse is,—that this evening the spectre has delivered a vehement discourse against the freedom of choosing sides in Cavagnole ; this was delivered in a tone which among us is utterly unheard of, and heard with a moderation no less surprising.'

'Madame du Châtelet is to-day in her third room, she could not bear that which she had chosen. It was noisy—there was *smoke without fire*. *It seems to me that this is her emblem*. She tells me that she does not care for this difficulty at night, but in the day time while she is at work, when it disturbs her ideas. She is at present reviewing her *Principles* ; \* this is an exercise

\* The Principia of Newton.

which she goes through every year, without which they might escape her and perhaps go so far that she would be left without any at all. I really believe that her head is a prison for them, and not the place of their birth; it is on this account that she guards them so carefully. She prefers the enjoyment of this occupation to all amusement, and persists in only showing herself at the end of the evening. Voltaire has made some polite verses, which compensate in part for the bad effect of their unusual conduct.'

'—The principal actress, Madame de Châtelet, preferring the interests of her own appearance to those of the piece, appeared on the stage with all the pomp and elegant attire of a lady of the court; on this point she had matter for quarrel with Voltaire; *but she is the sovereign and he is the slave*. I am sorry that they are gone, although I was worn out with the different whims which she made me comply with.'

'At all events we shall have a good room for you; it is that which Madame du Châtelet seized upon after a careful survey of the whole house. There will not be quite so much furniture in it as she left there; for she had stripped all the rooms through which she had passed successively that she might furnish this. We found six or seven tables there: she needed them of all sizes;—large ones to hold her papers,—heavy ones for her desk, lighter ones for her ornaments and jewelry: and this fine arrangement even had not secured her against an accident like that which happened to Philip, when having passed the night in writing some one upset a bottle of ink on his despatches. The lady did not exert herself to imitate the moderation of this prince; beside, he had written on nothing more than state affairs while her soiled manuscript was algebra and so much the more difficult to make legible.

'On this same subject, which I ought to have finished, I will say a word more to you and have done. The day after their departure I received a letter of four pages, besides a note in the same package which informed me of a great disaster: M. de Voltaire has mislaid his piece, forgotten to collect the copies of the parts, and lost the prologue. He has enjoined me to find the whole, to send on to him the prologue as soon as possible,



not by post *because they would copy it* ; to take care of the parts in fear of the same treatment, and to lock up the piece under a hundred keys. I should have thought that one lock would have been enough to guard the treasure. But I have taken care to execute his orders.'

But perhaps we have dwelt too long already upon these 'follies of the wise,' the narrative of which is after all but little better than mere scandal. It would even be imprudent to place too much confidence in the strict correctness of all these details, as the fair writers no doubt embellished the facts a little, to give effect to the picture, and make their correspondence interesting.

No individual, without deviating from a purely literary career, ever turned his talents for writing to so good an account, during his life time as Voltaire, whether we regard his reputation as an author, the wealth he acquired, or his standing in the best society of Europe. Philosophers and poets have before and since associated with the rich and great, but generally on an unequal footing. Racine and Molière figured at the court of Louis XIV as elegant flatterers, as the ministers of their master's pleasure ; and one of his frowns was enough to sink them into the grave. Voltaire on the contrary, was courted and caressed by the two greatest sovereigns of his time, and corresponded with them all his life, in the most familiar way. If they lost their respect for him, instead of dying with chagrin like Racine, he abused them in his turn, and they were glad to make advances to a reconciliation. Poverty has hitherto been the epidemic plague in the republic of letters ; and no effectual vaccination has ever yet been provided against it. Voltaire, without any hereditary fortune, placed himself very early in life by the proceeds of his writings, in an easy situation, and his wealth continuing to increase with his years, he became at last one of the most affluent private gentlemen in Europe. Far

from living in a humiliating pecuniary dependence on the great with whom he associated, he lent them money. The Maréchal de Richelieu was a long time in his debt, and perhaps never paid what he owed him. He lived at his castle at Ferney like a sort of independent sovereign, and received from all quarters the homage of his admirers, who went away enchanted with the vivacity of his conversation and the politeness and elegance of his social habits. Some persons have affected to speak with an air of mystery of his pecuniary resources, as if they had been of a corrupt character. Nothing however can be more improbable. We have seen that he lost instead of gaining by his titled friends, and the art of raising money by legerdemain, if it was ever known, has long since perished. He has himself explained the secret of his wealth in the little tract, entitled *Memoirs of his own life*. It is as simple in itself as it is honourable to his good sense and independent character, and bears internal evidence of being the true one. *Il faut être économe dans sa jeunesse: on accumule insensiblement un fonds.* This he says was the maxim upon which he proceeded, and we have seen with what success. He was besides one of the best managers of money in Europe, and was not like some of our men of genius, who are above the vulgar care of their own interest, though they are not above ruining their friends. He employed a part of his property in profitable commercial enterprizes, and superintended with great care the investment of the whole.

Whatever may be said of the injustice of contemporaries, and the unerring impartiality of posterity, we are of opinion, that the best security and prognostic of a high posthumous reputation is a high contemporary one. The world, though not over ceremonious and perhaps at times a little capricious, is generally clear-sighted and substantially just. Every rule, however, admits of ex-

ceptions, and it is a fair question in regard to any individual, whether future ages will confirm the judgment that was passed upon him, by the one in which he lived. One of Voltaire's enemies, Freron, we believe, being asked whether his reputation would stand the test of time, pointed to the hundred volumes of his works and replied in the negative, observing that 'no man's character could support a long journey under the weight of so much baggage.' There is no great force however in this remark. Most of the writers, who enjoy the highest reputation, have published a great deal that is not read; and their fame often rests upon one or two of their shortest productions. Fénelon was the author of forty or fifty more or less voluminous works, but is only known by the *Telemachus*. Bossuet wrote as many, but we hear of him only by the Funeral Orations and the Discourse on universal History, excepting that a few theological students look into the Variations. No voluminous author has perhaps ever written in proportion to the extent of his works less that will finally be overlooked and forgotten than Voltaire. His productions of great and acknowledged value, with his correspondence, make up the bulk of the collection, and there is much reason to anticipate that the letters will be hereafter at least as interesting, if not more so, than the rest, as well from their elegant and lively style, as from the high standing of the persons to whom they are addressed. The remark of Freron is therefore unfounded. With a view to elucidate the point in question, we propose to make a few cursory observations upon the principal works of Voltaire, which on other accounts may not be wholly uninteresting to our readers, although from the little room we have left for it, our notice must necessarily be extremely superficial.

The *Henriade* is the first in the order of time of Voltaire's important works, and as a serious epic, the first in

pretensions, but by general consent not one of the first in value. As we hold it to be very clear that an epic is not more difficult of execution and does not require higher powers of any kind, than any long poem of the elevated class, a tragedy for example, in which Voltaire succeeded, we must look for the reason of his comparative failure to something else beside want of talent. The fact probably is, that this poem was written at too early an age, and does not exhibit the maturity of the author's powers. The mind like the body advances in some individuals, by a slow and regular progress, and in others takes greater strides in a short time. The talent of Virgil took a start of this description in the interval between the *Culex* and the *Georgics*, and the productions of Goëthe, prior to the *Sorrows of Werther*, would never be suspected of coming from the same pen with that work. They are cold, childish, and silly, although some of them were of as late an age as two or three and twenty, while in *Werther*, which followed immediately after, *the pen*, as was said of Rousseau, *burns the paper*. Pope, on the contrary, wrote nearly as well at twelve and fourteen as he ever did, and with almost as much maturity of thought, at least if we can believe that he produced at that age the imitations of Chaucer. Between the time when Voltaire wrote the *Henriade* and the best of his tragedies, which were his next publications, an interval of several years elapsed, in the course of which he kept his faculties in constant exercise, and, besides, enjoyed the advantages of visiting several foreign countries, and the still greater advantage of being persecuted. Persecution, which crushes a weak mind, unfolds to a strong one the secret of its own powers, that no other process can ever thoroughly develop. We venture to say, that no man was ever great in any department of intellectual exertion, whose soul had not, in some way or

other, been tempered in the fiery furnace of adversity. It is no objection to this remark to say, that instances may be produced, in which the greatest men have apparently run through a career of uninterrupted prosperity. 'The heart knoweth his own bitterness,' says the scripture, and its secret trials are not always the least severe. To take an example. For any thing that is publicly known the fine poet that has touched the enchanting chords of the 'Northern Harp' with such exquisite taste and skill, has led a life of constant success and ease. But what says the epilogue to the *Lady of the Lake*?

\* \* \* Secret griefs the world has never known ;  
' That I endured, such woes, enchantress, is thine own.'

We may add, however, for the consolation of those who are ambitious of greatness, that considering the tolerable mixture of evil which enters into the present state of things, there is no great reason to fear that any body will be in want of this necessary but unfortunately not sole condition.

To return from this digression to the *Henriade*, it is sometimes said that the subject is not a remarkably fortunate one, but although we agree in this opinion, we consider it no apology for the want of success, as the accident of choosing the best subject never happens to any but the very best writers. The truth is after all that the *Henriade* is a much better poem than is generally supposed by those, who, without having read it, take their opinion of it from critics who are probably in the same predicament. In France, though it is not considered quite so good as the best tragedies of its author, it is much valued and much read. We do not mean to say that it can be compared with either of the four great epics: but these happen to be the productions upon which their writers laid out their whole stock of intellectual

wealth, particularly the Jerusalem and the Paradise Lost. For with regard to the *Iliad* and *Æneid*, the former is indebted for a large part of its reputation to its curiosity as a literary monument, and cannot fairly be brought into comparison with any production of a civilized age; and as to the *Æneid*, if it should be thought extravagant to say that its merits are not greatly superior to those of the *Henriade*, it will at least be allowed that they are of the same character. The *Æneid*, as well as the *Henriade*, is defective in plan, and fails in attracting any interest to the characters. Its great merit is the charm of the language, the principal one it is true in all poetry, but which is also to be found in the work of Voltaire, though in a less degree. As a specimen of the style of this poem, we take the liberty of extracting from the vision of Henry, in the seventh book, the passages in which the poet describes the reign of Louis XIV, and the death of the Duke of Burgundy, the pupil of Fénélon. It will be observed that the latter is imitated in part from the passage in the sixth book of the *Æneid*, on the death of Marcellus.

‘Ciel! quel pompeux amas d’esclaves à genoux  
Est aux pieds de ce roi qui les fait trembler tous.  
Quels honneurs! quels respects! jamais roi dans la France  
N’accoutuma son peuple à tant d’obéissance.  
Je le vois, comme vous, par la gloire animé,  
Mieux obéi, plus craint, peut-être moins aimé.  
Je le vois éprouvant des fortunes diverses,  
Trop fier dans ses succès, mais ferme en ses traverses;  
De vingt peuples ligüés bravant seul tout l’effort,  
Admirable en sa vie, et plus grand dans sa mort.  
Siècle heureux de Louis, siècle que la nature  
De ses plus beaux présents doit combler sans mesure,  
C’est toi qui dans la France amenes les beaux arts;  
Sur toi tout l’avenir va porter ses regards;  
Les muses à jamais y fixent leur empire;  
La toile est animée, et le marbre respire.  
Quels sages, rassemblés dans ces augustes lieux,  
Mesurent l’univers, et lisent dans les cieux;

Et, dans la nuit obscure apportant la lumière,  
Sondent les profondeurs de la nature entière ?

\* \* \* \* \*

' Quel est ce jeune prince en qui la majesté  
Sur son visage aimable éclate sans flerté ?  
D'un œil d'indifférence il regarde le trône...  
Ciel ! quelle nuit soudaine à mes yeux l'environne ?  
La mort, autour de lui, vole sans s'arrêter ;  
Il tombe au pied du trône, étant près d'y monter.  
O mon fils ! des Français vous voyez le plus juste ;  
Les cieux le formeront de votre sang auguste.  
Grand Dieu, ne faites-vous que montrer aux humains  
Cette fleur passagère, ouvrage de vos mains ?  
Hélas ! que n'eût point fait cette ame vertueuse !  
La France sous son regne eût été trop heureuse !  
Il eût entretenu l'abondance et la paix ;  
Mon fils, il eût compté ses jours par ses bienfaits ;  
Il eût aimé son peuple. O jour rempli d'alarmes !  
O combien les Français vont répandre de larmes,  
Quand sous la même tombe ils verront réunis  
Et l'époux et la femme, et la mère et le fils !'

But whatever may be the real merit of the *Henriade*, the tragedies are unquestionably the most solid foundation of the poetical fame of Voltaire in his own country. Of the fifteen or twenty poems of this class that are regarded as standard and classical productions by the French, Voltaire contributed about a third part, besides producing many others of somewhat inferior merit, that are at times represented and read with pleasure. It would be superfluous to make any particular remarks upon poems so well known to all, who have any acquaintance with French literature. It is no serious objection to them that to us, who are accustomed to a different style of tragedy, they appear somewhat stiff and cold, like all the other plays of the French school. The taste for poetry is conventional in all countries to a degree which is not generally imagined ; and when we say that the French school of tragedy does not suit our taste, or does not please us so well as that of Shakspeare and Schiller,

we only say in other words that we were educated in one country and not in another, without touching in the least degree the question of their relative merits. And as to this question, which is evidently a mere question of forms, we have always thought it surprising that it should be considered so important by all the critics, French, English, and German. It will be admitted that it requires equal genius, and first rate genius to succeed in either school, the *classical* or the *romantic*, and the productions of a writer of first rate genius, will always, we apprehend, be read with the highest pleasure, however their form may have been modified by his education. We should all say in every such case as Johnson does of the *Paradise Lost*, notwithstanding his fondness for rhyme, that he should be sorry to have it in any other form than what it is. The truth is, that genius ennobles and beautifies every form, so that the question is entirely of a secondary character, which of two given forms is abstractedly superior. And as to the question itself, such as it is, we must needs say, though educated in a romantic country, and labouring under the consequent prejudices, that we cannot shut our eyes to the plain fact that the principles of the classical school, in regard to the mere form of tragedy as a work of art, are decidedly preferable.

Voltaire adopted the form of tragedy, which had been determined in France by the success of Corneille and Racine. But in conforming to the same general principles, he avoids some of the faults in taste which are chargeable upon his predecessors. We do not see in his tragedies the illustrious heroes of former ages introduced merely to languish at the feet of a pretty woman, like the Tituses and Alexanders of Racine, or the Cids and Suetoniuses of Corneille: Cesar in Voltaire as in Shakespeare is the ambitious dictator, while in Corneille he is



the knight-errant of the Queen of Egypt. We may remark *en passant* that the author of *Waverley* has shown a similar good judgment in the management of his characters, and has thereby been the first to rescue the historical romance from the degradation into which it had fallen in the hands of Madame de Genlis, the Misses Porter, and others of that stamp. What a contrast between Prince Charles Edward, Claverhouse, Rob Roy, Mr Oldbuck, and the rest, all natural business men in their way, and such worthies as Thaddeus of Warsaw and Sir William Wallace! And we have here a remarkable proof how little comparative importance belongs to forms of compositions, since we find that the historical novel, which was considered hitherto as an illegitimate one and incapable of being treated in a superior way, has turned out in the hands of a man of genius, one of the most agreeable that has ever been attempted.

To return to Voltaire:—We find in his tragedies a considerable tinge of philosophy resulting from the taste of the age and his own, and which sometimes strikes the reader as misplaced or ill timed. Thus *Zaire*, a young girl in her teens, brought up from her infancy in the seraglio of the sultan of Jerusalem, and desperately in love with him, can hardly be supposed to think or know much about general principles of any kind, and least of all on religious matters: yet she states the grounds of religious toleration with a clearness and precision that might put to shame our gravest doctors of divinity. Opinions according to this blooming philosopher are the offspring of climate. Give me the latitude and longitude where a man was born and educated, and I will tell you his opinions and habits, with the same certainty as the colour of his skin. To persecute or hate a man for his opinions is therefore to persecute him for being born and bred at a

certain time and place rather than another, as if this were a thing at his option.

'J'eusse été près du Gange esclave des faux dieux,  
Chrétienne à Paris, Musulmane en ces lieux.'

Now, though all this is very true, we apprehend that it bears with it internal evidence of being out of place, for the climate of the seraglio of Jerusalem is certainly not the climate of philosophy, and if any such exotic product were forced in it, it would be more likely to be found among the guardians of that Earthly Paradise than its tenants. Detached verses may be quoted from the tragedies in which philosophical thoughts are expressed with great force and beauty: as the following,

'Le premier qui fût roi fut un soldat heureux,  
Qui sert bien son pays, n'a pas besoin d'yeux.'

an allusion to the noble sentiment of Hector in the Iliad,

*Εἰς οἶκόν γε ἄριστος, ἀμύνομαι περὶ πατρός.*

The most remarkable however of the philosophical passages in the tragedies is the scene in Mahomet, in which the prophet explains to the chief magistrate of Mecca the principles which regulate his conduct. It is neither more nor less than a discussion between these two personages of the important philosophical question, how far an individual has a right to undertake a reform of the religion of his country and age, and on what principles he ought to proceed. Mahomet is the reformer and Zopyrus the supporter of established systems. The arguments on both sides of this question are too familiar to our readers to require any notice of them. Jean Jacques Rousseau pronounces this scene to be the best in the whole compass of French tragedy. But although it is written with force and eloquence, it may be doubted whether this

judgment of the citizen of Geneva was not dictated in part by personal prejudices. It was natural enough for one who had often meditated upon this great point of casuistry to take pleasure in seeing the argument powerfully stated in the finest poetry. But the greater part of the audience would hardly perceive the drift of the controversy and of course would take very little interest in it: and the best scene in a tragedy is tho one that produces the greatest effect. The passions on the contrary being common to all classes, the lowest of the spectators may be nearly as much affected by a striking exhibition of their movements as the highest, although they may not be able to judge quite so nicely on the merits of the performance as a work of art.

If the tragedies of Voltaire are the most solid foundations of his fame in France, his historical works probably contributed more than any of the rest to make him known in foreign countries, and stand as fair a chance of being generally read hereafter. The *Essay on the Manners of different Nations* with the *Ages of Louis XIV and XV*, form a complete universal history from the time of Charlemagne to the middle of the last century. Besides these he has given in separate works the history of Peter the Great, of Charles XII of Sweden, and of the French Parliament. Tho *Essay on the Manners* is the most considerable of these productions, and will bear a comparison both in respect to style and substance with any historical work of ancient or modern times; and of all histories it is certainly by far the most amusing. No body had previously thought it consistent with the dignity of this kind of writing to relax from a steady and sustained gravity, and it was usual to observe almost as much form and ceremony in describing the actions of kings and princes, as in approaching their persons. Voltaire being no respecter of authority, dead or living,

enlivens his narrative with satirical sallies against the follies of these personages, often not less prominent than their crimes; and this, it may be safely said, was the only way of treating with success the barbarous and bloody period which he had chosen for his subject. The work loses something of its interest by the extreme rapidity with which the reader is carried from one event to another. The introductory volume was written at a later period of life when the author's abhorrence of fanaticism had degenerated into fanaticism itself, and has but little value. The Age of Louis XIV is even more finished and agreeable, as a piece of composition than the Essay, but the writer with all his philosophy appears to have been dazzled by the military glory of the early part of this reign, or else was making court to his hero's successor. The picture of Louis is too much flattered, and the historian dwells with a foolish complacency upon the showy pageants which were exhibited at court, and which, as every one knows, are not only too frivolous to be worth the public attention, but are mortally tiresome to every body engaged in them, even while they are going on. The age of Louis XV is an unfinished sketch, but contains some fine passages, as the description of the battle of Fontenoy. The History of Charles XII is a charming little work with all the interest of a novel, and is probably more read than any other historical production. The other two are of inferior merit.

Besides the works now mentioned, which compose the solid materials of the reputation of this great genius, there is a crowd of lighter and smaller productions in prose and verse, that are almost eclipsed under the superior splendor of the larger works, but which, had he never written any thing else, would have conferred upon their author the most brilliant reputation. Some of them are tainted in a greater or less degree with a vice which luckily for his

reputation, is not to be found in his more important works. *Candide* is of this class, the sharpest satire that ever was composed, and one which has gaiety enough, if such a thing were possible, to redeem its grossness. The fine little story of *Zadig* is free from this exception. It was written expressly for a princess of the royal family of France, and in her house. In addition to this mass of publications in almost every walk of literature, Voltaire found time for an extensive correspondence with most of the distinguished literary characters, and many of the first political ones in Europe, as Frederic the Great, Catharine II of Russia, the Maréchal de Richelieu, President Hénault, D'Alembert, and others. The greater part of this correspondence has found its way into the collection of his works, and will probably, as we have hinted before, form not the least interesting portion of it, in the opinion of posterity. As one of the multitude of proofs with what a reverence approaching to idolatry, this celebrated person was regarded, it may be remarked that it was debated in the French Academy after his death, whether the chair which he had occupied in that body should not be left forever vacant. The proposition passed in the negative, but as far at least as regarded his immediate successor, it seems to have been acted upon in substance. Ducis, a small poet of the day, took his place, and found himself as much at ease as the snail in La Fontaine's Fable, that froze to death in a lobster shell.

We shall draw these remarks to a close with a trifling anecdote, which perhaps may be new to our readers, and which we lately met with in a French newspaper. We think it carries internal proof of authenticity. It relates to the etymology of the name *Voltaire*, which this writer has rendered so illustrious, and which we believe is commonly thought to have been either entirely arbitrary or taken from some little estate, according to the custom

with French gentlemen of that day. It is now said however to be merely a transposition of the letters composing the original signature which he employed in early life. His family name, it is well known, was *Arouet*, and having an elder brother he used to sign his name when young *Arouet l. I; — le Jeune*. The word *Voltaire* is an anagram or transposition of the letters in this signature.

In conclusion we have to observe, that we have not so far distrusted the moral sentiment of our readers, as to imitate the example of some of the most distinguished of our brethren abroad, and fall into passionate exclamations upon the immorality disclosed by this work, as well in the state of society as in the individuals, whose names occur in our article. No person needs be told that many in the higher classes abroad—we are not aware that any considerable exception is to be made of one country over others—are scandalously corrupt, in the article of private morals. We read their works, recognize their talents, do justice to their accomplishments, mingle as one may say in their company, with this exception, and are on our guard on this point. We indeed, in this country, where the suspicion of laxity in the sacred relations of domestic life fixes a stigma on its subjects, might claim a right to bear loud testimony, did it serve any good purpose, against European corruption. But we would gently hint to our English brethren to abstain from any similar denunciations of French society, till that great scandal of the civilized world now under the consideration of the peers of the British realm, shall have been disposed of.

## THE ART OF BEING HAPPY.\*

[North American Review, July, 1838.]

THE author of the little work before us has not attempted any regular definition of happiness; but assuming that we all know pretty well what it is, has employed himself principally on inquiring how we may attain it. We are not sure that a more thorough investigation of the nature of the end would not have modified in some degree the notions of Mr Droz, in regard to the means. However this may be, it appears that he has made, as he conceives, some important discoveries, or at least greatly simplified and improved upon received notions. He has methodized his principles into a series of rules, which he entitles *The Art of Being Happy*; and he believes that by a steady and judicious application of them, a man may realize the *summum bonum* with a good degree of certainty. The subject is of so much importance, that all theories respecting it are worth examining, should they even turn out to be somewhat less original and valuable than they are considered by their authors.

Mr Droz commences by expressing his surprise at the apparent indifference of most persons to their own good.

'Our object in life,' he remarks, 'is happiness. One would think this a sufficiently familiar truth; but how often is it overlooked or depised! To see the restlessness and agitation of

\* *Essai sur l'Art d'Être Heureux*, par JOSEPH DROZ, de l'Académie Française. 4<sup>me</sup> Edition. 12mo. pp. 335. Paris. 1825.

many persons, one would suppose that the great affair was not to be happy, but to be rich, or to obtain some office.'

And again;

'Make happiness the principal object of your life. When one of your neighbors says to you, "My speculations are successful; I shall certainly become immensely rich;" and another, "I shall doubtless carry my election, and am on the high road of political advancement;" reply with equal self-satisfaction, "As for me, I hope to enjoy many happy days."'

Although the mass of mankind, in aiming at various unsubstantial objects of pursuit, overlook, in the opinion of our author, the search after happiness, he admits that there are some illustrious exceptions; and reckons among them our countryman Dr Franklin, of whom he speaks in the following high terms.

'We see, from time to time, appearing among us, some of those rare individuals whom nature intended as models of moral beauty. Such was Benjamin Franklin, the pride of the new world. I have often perused the pages in which he describes his plan for aiming at moral perfection, and which he concludes as follows. "Although I have not attained the perfection at which I aimed, and have even fallen very far short of it, my endeavors have nevertheless rendered me better and happier than I should have been if I had not made the attempt, as a person who tries to improve in penmanship by imitating a copperplate model, although he should not equal the correctness and elegance of the engraving, may yet acquire a more easy and legible hand than he had before. It may be interesting to my posterity to know that I owe, under Providence, to this little artifice, the happiness which I have constantly enjoyed up to my seventy-ninth year, in which I write these lines. Should the rest of my life be disturbed by misfortunes, the recollection of the preceding period will enable me to support them with resignation."'



While we perfectly agree with Mr Droz, in his estimate of the character of our illustrious townsman, and particularly in his approbation of the doctrine contained in the above extract from the Memoirs of his own life, we cannot but remark that it does not appear to confirm, so explicitly as our author supposes, his favorite notion of the great importance of making the direct pursuit of happiness the principal object. Dr Franklin assures us in this passage that by the use of certain means, which he describes, he had lived happily up to a very advanced age. But what were these means? Did they consist in making happiness the direct and principal object of pursuit? Quite the contrary, as appears from the showing of Mr Droz himself. 'I have often perused,' says our author as above quoted, 'the pages in which Franklin describes his plan for arriving at *moral perfection*.' Moral perfection, then, was the mark to which our philosopher directed his view. By aiming not immediately at happiness, but at moral perfection or virtue, he succeeded, it appears, in making himself, to a certain extent, both virtuous and happy. The conclusion is (as far as a single example can be depended on) that if a man would be happy he must endeavor to be virtuous, and that if he succeed tolerably well in this, happiness will come of itself. Mr Droz, on the contrary, advises that we should aim directly and immediately at happiness, leaving moral perfection (of which, indeed, he says but little) to come in by the way, as it may or can. Waiving any inquiry into the respective merits of the two systems, we cannot but remark that the example and precepts of Franklin, instead of confirming, as he appears to imagine, the theory of our author, are exactly opposed to it, and as far as they have weight, completely refute it in its foundation. Had Mr Droz examined more carefully, and followed out into its consequences the principle supposed in the single pas-

sage above quoted, he would probably, if he really feel the veneration which he professes, for 'the pride of the new world,' have spared himself the trouble of writing his book, at least in its present shape. In fact, his theory and that of Dr Franklin, instead of coinciding, plainly exhibit the adverse colors of the two great rival schools of philosophy, into which the moral world has always been divided. Franklin wishes us to frequent

'The marble porch where wisdom wont to talk  
With Socrates and Tully;'

while Mr Droz would conduct us, in preference, to certain pleasure gardens of somewhat doubtful fame, which were laid out in olden time in the neighborhood of the said porch, but were never much patronized by the good society of Athens. We regret, by the bye, to learn that our fair friend, Miss Frances Wright, lately consented to pass a few days in these same suspicious gardens; but venture to hope, that she has only been upon a tour of observation, and will not think of making them her habitual residence.\*

By aiming at moral perfection, it appears that Dr Franklin not only partially attained his object, but succeeded besides in realizing a good measure of happiness. Whether a man, who, in compliance with the advice of Mr Droz, should regard happiness as his direct and immediate object, would in that way be likely to make any corresponding approaches towards the attainment of moral perfection, is perhaps uncertain. But waving this

\*See her work, entitled *A Few Days at Athens*, which contains a very ingenious exposition and defence of the Epicurean philosophy, in the antique form of dialogues. Although we disapprove the doctrine, which is also decidedly at variance with the principles recommended in the *Views of Society and Manners in America*, by the same lady, we cannot but regard the literary execution of it as highly creditable to the learning and talents of the fair writer.

point, which does not belong to our present subject, there is room to fear that the method recommended by our author may not be so effectual, even for the acquisition of happiness itself, as he appears to imagine. There are some things which are come at by an indirect process, more easily than by a direct one; and many competent judges believe that happiness is one of the number. We strongly incline to this opinion, and suspect that the pretended *art of being happy* is very much like the *art of making gold*, which at one time occupied the attention of so many of the learned, but which has long been admitted to be almost the only process by which gold cannot be made. Make shoes, make coats, make hats, make houses, make almost anything you please (except perhaps books), and you in fact make *gold*, because the product of your labor, whatever it may be, converts itself naturally in your hands into that valuable metal. But once attempt to make gold by a direct process, and you not only fail in your object, but sustain a total loss of the time, labor, and capital employed in the operation. The case, we imagine, is nearly the same with studying directly the *art of being happy*. Study politics, study law, study commerce, study agriculture, study any of the fine or mechanical arts, and you in fact study happiness, because independently, of the immediate fruit of skill, in this or that department of knowledge and practice, which you derive from your studies, there is no more certain way of being happy, than to pursue with activity and diligence almost any honest employment. But no sooner does a man set about studying directly how he shall be happy, than he is pretty sure to become completely miserable. D'Alembert maintained, in conversation, that happiness was an exclusive privilege of those whom the world calls wretched. *Qui est-ce qui est heureux?* said he, and then replied to his own question, *Quelque misérable*; that is to

say, 'Your poor devil is your only happy man.' And there is a good deal of truth, as well as much consolation, in this. The common blessings which Providence distributes abundantly to the prudent and virtuous of even the humblest classes, are no doubt quite as conducive to happiness as the imaginary and illusive advantages of the favorites of fortune. But if, reversing the question of D'Alembert, we ask, '*Qui est-ce qui est misérable?*' 'Who is the real poor devil?' we may perhaps reply with confidence, that it is the man who is always studying to be happy. The experience of the world in all ages and nations, from Seged, king of Ethiopia, down to the luckless school-boy, groaning under the burden of a holiday, confirms this notion. And there appears to be a deep philosophical reason for the fact, at which we have already hinted. It is, that happiness was not intended by nature to be the direct result of an operation, performed with the immediate purpose of attaining it; but on the contrary, the indirect result of an operation intended immediately and principally for the attainment of another object, which is (according to the theory of Franklin, no doubt the true one,) moral perfection or virtue.

The leading principle of Mr Droz, which makes happiness the direct and exclusive object of pursuit, is therefore, we think, erroneous, and his whole doctrine fails of course, in its foundation, or, in the French phrase, *pèche par sa base*. Nevertheless, as our author professes to teach us the art of being happy, and as credit is generally allowed to every man in the art he professes, *omni perito in suâ arte credendum est*, it may be proper, before we condemn his theory, to survey it a little more in detail.

After establishing as a preliminary maxim, that the attainment of happiness is the proper object of life, our author proceeds to explain the means by which, in his opinion, it is to be effected. The first requisite is, that

we should exempt ourselves entirely from the trammels of all the ordinary business of the world that is going on about us. It is only in this way, that we can be independent; and independence, according to Mr Droz, is essential to happiness.

‘The only true independence is that which we enjoy when we dispose of all our time at discretion, without being embarrassed with professional or other business. This sort of liberty is oppressive to the unoccupied (*hommes inoccupés*), but to others is a source of real happiness. How charming it is to say to one’s self, upon awaking in the morning, “This day is wholly my own.” *The Epicurean* passes a delightful hour, before he rises, in reflecting on the pleasures of independence.’

We may remark, *en passant*, that Mr Droz avows in this passage his adhesion to the school of philosophy with which we had identified him. *Habeo contentem reum*; in the language of the great Roman orator. As respects the principle supposed, our author’s Utopia bears a singular resemblance to that of Gonzalo in the Tempest.

In order to be happy, we must have nothing to do, no professions, no trades, no business of any kind;

‘no kind of traffic  
Would I admit, no name of magistrate;  
Letters should not be known; no use of service,  
Of riches or of poverty; no contracts,  
Successions; bound of land, tilth, vineyard none,  
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil,  
No occupation; all men idle, all;  
And women too, but innocent and pure;  
No sovereignty;’

and afterwards;

‘All things in common nature should produce  
Without sweat or endeavor; treason, felony,  
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine  
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth  
Of her own kind all foison, all abundance,  
To feed my innocent people.’

The picture, no doubt, has a very seducing aspect. It may be observed, however, that in the case of our author, as in that of the honest old counsellor of Naples, the latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning. Gonzalo, after declaring that he would have no sovereignty in the island, concludes by affirming, that he

‘ would with such perfection govern, Sir,  
To excel the golden age.’

Mr Droz, in like manner, while setting forth the freedom from all occupation as the chief element of happiness, remarks in the same sentence, that ‘to *unoccupied men* the want of occupation is oppressive, but that to *others* it is a source of real happiness.’ Now we profess ourselves unable to conceive who are the *others* intended in this phrase. We agree with our author in thinking that persons who are unoccupied will be unhappy; but on our view of the subject, all persons who have no occupation are unoccupied. The *others* who, on the theory of Mr Droz, are to enjoy the delights of the *dolce far niente*, seem to us to belong to the same category with the *rest* of the three children, who ran away when their comrades fell into the water;

‘ Three children sliding on the ice,  
All on a summer’s day,  
It so fell out they *all* fell in,  
The *rest* they ran away.’

Mr Droz may perhaps reply, that the *happy few* intended are those who, having really nothing to do, are able to create occupation for themselves. But this explanation, which can hardly be reconciled with the language, is also in itself replete with difficulties. Why present, as the principal element of happiness, what is misery to the greater number, and paradise only to one in a thousand? And again; How does it appear, that the occupation

which a man creates for himself is so much more agreeable than that which devolves upon him by the effect of circumstances? Is occupation, in the opinion of our author, a sort of moral disease, which is fatal when forced upon a man in the natural way, but which, when he gives it to himself, not only becomes less malignant, like the small pox when contracted by inoculation, but is actually converted into a principle of health and wellbeing? Does experience confirm this singular theory? We think not. Take the example of the Count de Caylus, a French nobleman, well known to the scientific world by the publication of a collection of engravings from antique vases, with a learned and elegant commentary. *Je grave*, said the Count to a brother nobleman, by way of apology for devoting himself to an employment which the other regarded as beneath their common dignity, *je grave pour ne pas me pendre*. 'I engrave, that I may not hang myself!' The Count was one of the select number who, having really nothing to do, are able to create occupation for themselves, and ought, on our author's system, to have been perfectly happy. Yet what was the extent of his felicity? Forsooth to escape hanging. A pretty definition of the *summum bonum*! Instead of confirming the theory of Mr Droz, the example of M. de Caylus rather tends to establish the reverse. Many excellent citizens, in all countries, have obtained reputation, wealth and happiness, by pursuing, as a means of support, the same respectable occupation of engraving, which seems to have conferred upon the Count no other benefit, than that of saving his neck from the pocket handkerchief or the pen-knife. And we doubt not that the general current of examples would sustain the moral deducible from that of the learned Frenchman.

Independently therefore of the glaring inconsistency observable in this passage, we are quite clear in the per-

suaſion, that the common ſenſe of the world is againſt Mr Droz on the main point, and in favor of the purſuit of ſome honeſt employment, as one of the moſt efficacious means for attaining happineſs. All the principal books are agreed in this. What ſays Voltaire for example,—a high authority with our author? *Le travail éloigne de nous, trois grands maux, le vice, le beſoin, et l'ennui.* 'Labor ſecures us againſt three great evils, vice, want, and *ennui.*' What ſays Dr Franklin, 'the pride of the new world,'—the *magnus Apollo* of Mr Droz? If our author would know, let him read Poor Richard, *Le Bon-homme Richard*, as the French tranſlate it, where he will find but ſlender encouragement to be idle. We cannot indeed but expreſs our wonder, that a writer, whoſe chief purpoſe ſeems to be to inculcate the advantages of idleneſs, ſhould have ſelected the author of the 'Way to Wealth,' as his guide, philoſopher, and friend. Finally, what ſays the Bible? For we take it for granted, that Mr Droz is a good Chriſtian, and will acknowledge the authority of the precepts of the wiſe king of Iſrael. The Epicurean practice of lying in bed an hour or two in the morning in order to ruminate upon the pleaſure of having nothing to do through the day, is alluded to by Solomon in no very flattering terms. 'As the door turneth upon its hinges, ſo doth the ſlothful man in his bed.' Does Mr Droz conceive, that the happineſs of a wiſe and good man conſiſts in imitating the mechanical action of a door turning upon its hinges? 'So ſhall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.' Are poverty and want the chief elements of happineſs? Even the weaker ſex are exhorted to be up betimes and doing. The pattern wife 'riſeth while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her houſehold. She looketh well to the ways of her houſehold, and eateth not the bread of idleneſs.' Her place, it ſeems, is no ſinecure; but what reward has ſhe



for her trouble? 'Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.' Approved by her husband, honored by her children, the pride and love of all around her, our busy, little housewife is, after all, not so badly off. Can Mr Droz promise his fair disciples anything better than this as a reward for being idle? We apprehend not.

According to our belief, the common sense of the world is therefore, as we have already remarked, against Mr Droz on this point, and in favor of the diligent pursuit of some regular occupation, as a principal element of happiness. It is true that we hear at times, from the Italians, of the *dolce far niente*, or the delight of having nothing to do; but even in the same quarter, there are not wanting respectable authorities in favor of a different system. The Marquis of Spinola, an Italian general, celebrated for his military exploits in the war of the independence of the Netherlands, passed the latter part of his life in retirement, upon a handsome pension, and of course in the full fruition of the *dolce far niente*; but being one of these persons without occupation, who are also unoccupied, he found himself (as usually happens, even according to our author, with gentlemen of this description) rather ill at ease. While in this situation, he was informed of the death of one of his ancient comrades of inferior rank in the army, a captain perhaps, or possibly a colonel; and upon inquiring into the nature of his disease, was answered that he died of having nothing to do. *Morì della malattia di non tenere niente a fare.* Basta, replied the unhappy Marquis, with a strong feeling of sympathy in the fate of his departed brother of the war, *basta per un generale.* 'Tis enough to have killed him, had he been a general.'

Such, even on Italian authority, are the pleasures of the *dolce far niente*. They appear to be enjoyed in the

same way in other ranks and walks of life. Read, for example, in Lafontaine, the story of the cheerful cobbler, rendered miserable by a present of a hundred crowns, and finally returning in despair to lay them at the feet of his would-be benefactor, and recover his good humor and his last. Behold the luckless schoolboy (to recur again to one of the examples, at which we have already hinted), torn from his natural occupation on some Thursday or Saturday afternoon, and perishing under the burden of a holiday. See him hanging at his mother's side, and begging her, with tears in his eyes, to give him something to do; while she, poor woman, aware that the evil is irremediable, can only console him, by holding out the prospect of a return to school the next day. Observe the tradesman who has made his fortune (as the phrase is), and retired from business, or the opulent proprietor enjoying his dignified leisure. How he toils at the task of doing nothing; as a ship without ballast at sea, when it falls calm after a heavy blow, labors more without stirring an inch, than in going ten knots an hour with a good breeze. How he 'groans and sweats' as Shakespeare has it, under a happy life! How he cons over at night, for the third time, the newspaper which he read through twice, from beginning to end, immediately after breakfast! A wealthy capitalist, reduced by good fortune to this forlorn condition, has assured us, that he often begs the domestics, who are putting his room in order, to prolong the operation as much as possible, that he may enjoy again, for a little while, the lost delight of superintending and witnessing the performance of useful labor.

But this is not the worst. No sooner does he find himself in the state of unoccupied blessedness, than a host of unwished for visitants (doubtless the same with those who took possession of the swept and garnished

lodgings of him in scripture) enter on his premises, and declare his body good prize. *Dyspepsia* (a new name of horror) plucks from his lips the untasted morsel and the brimming bowl, bedims his eyes with unnatural blindness, and powders his locks with premature old age. *Hypochondria* (the accursed blues of the fathers) ploughs his cheeks with furrows, and heaps a perpetual cloud upon his brow. *Hepatitis* (like the vulture of Prometheus) gnaws at his liver. *Rheumatism* racks his joints; *Gout* grapples him by the great toe; so that what with 'black spirits and white, blue spirits and gray,' the poor man suffers martyrdom in every nerve and fibre, until *Palsy* or *Apoplexy*, after all, the kindest of the tribe, gives him the *coup de grace*, and releases him from his misery. His elysium is much like that of the departed Grecian heroes in the *Odyssey*, who frankly avowed to Ulysses, that they would rather be the meanest day-laborers above ground, than reign supreme over all the shades below.

In the above course of remarks, we have given Mr Droz every advantage in the argument, because we have supposed that it is entirely optional with every man, whether he shall work or be idle, and that in making up his mind upon the subject, he has only to consult his own convenience or caprice. But our author seems himself to have been aware, that this is not precisely the case, and has anticipated the objections, that some old-fashioned persons might consider it as a duty to make themselves useful, by turning their talents to account in one way or another, while a still larger class are compelled to labor by the imperious call of necessity. These difficulties, we say, our author anticipates and endeavors to remove; but in what manner? The reader shall judge.

The first objection appears to give him but little embarrassment. 'Moralists tell us,' he observes, 'that we must make ourselves useful, that we must pay our debt

to society. But in order to be useful to the world, I see not why a man must necessarily exercise a profession or hold an office. Tell me not that my morals are dangerous, and that my system will deprive the community of the services of the individuals who compose it. Be not alarmed! You will never be in want of governors to rule you, bankers and lawyers to fleece you, or physicians to extricate you from their hands.'

Refraining, at the special request of Mr Droz, from telling him that his morals are dangerous, we must be permitted to remark, that his logic appeared to us to be defective. The question, as we understand it, is not, whether individuals will or will not work; whether there will or will not always be such professions and employments, as those of bankers, lawyers, public functionaries and physicians, (concerning which very respectable occupations the author expresses himself, in our opinion, in much too uncereemonious terms;) but whether it be better for the world that individuals should or should not work, and that these and other similar professions should or should not exist. Mr Droz contends, that it is in general the preferable course, for people to be idle rather than to work; and when pressed with the objection, that if the habit of idleness were to prevail generally, the community would be without laborers, he turns round upon us with the naked assertion, that individuals will at all events work. This may be and probably is true; but whether it be or not, is a thing, in our judgment, entirely foreign to the argument. If individuals will at all events work, it follows of course that they will not be idle; and in that case the community will certainly not suffer for want of their labor. But in the case before us, the supposition is that they do not work, and on that supposition the conclusion follows with equal rigor, that the community will suffer for want of their labor. If Mr

Droz do not feel the necessity of it, we must in conscience (at the risk of appearing uncivil) advise him to sell his Montaigne, and buy with the proceeds a copy of Watt's Logic. 'In order to be useful to the world, I see not,' says our author, 'why a man should exercise a profession or hold an office. It is enough that he lay in bed two or three hours every morning, to ruminate upon the pleasure of having nothing to do through the day.' A mighty profitable thing, no doubt, to the community! But why? Forsooth, because men will work! Or, bringing the case home to the individual supposed, because it is certain that he will at all events work. In plain language, and reducing the argument to its simplest terms, it is unnecessary for a man to work in order to make himself useful, because it is certain that he will at all events work! Shade of Peter Ramus! what dialectics!

The mode in which our author meets the objection drawn from the necessity of labor to the subsistence of the individual, is in our opinion still more unsatisfactory. It is here indeed that the difficulty really presses. In all the systems with which we are acquainted, including that of Mr Droz, it appears to be regarded as one of the principal elements of happiness, that a man should have his regular three meals a day. Even the *dolce far niente*, were it ten times as sweet as Mr Droz thinks it, would turn sour on an empty stomach. It is also well known, that there is a sort of mysterious sympathy between the workshop and the kitchen (similar to that which was discovered by the late premier of Great Britain between the breeches pocket and the animal spirits), by the effect of which, the operations that usually go on in the latter, are generally affected by the state of those which appertain to the former, and proceed vigorously, or come to a stand, along with them. When the spinning wheel ceases to revolve, and the shuttle to vibrate; when the

hammer no longer descends upon the anvil, and the goose reposes coldly on the shopboard,—the spit in like manner stops in its course, the fire goes out in the oven, and the water in the pudding-pot recovers its natural level. Such are the acknowledged principles of the economy of domestic life. In one word, a man who will not work cannot eat. While this is the case, and while eating is necessary to happiness, it is in vain to tell him, that in order to be happy he must be idle, for the plain reason, that a hungry man never listens to advice. *Ventre affamé n'a pas d'oreilles.* Our author, to do him justice, feels the force of this objection, and admits it to a certain extent. But with what sort of grace? Does he yield with the good humor of a philosopher and a Frenchman, who knows how to take his *parti*, and after a passing shrug of the shoulders resigns himself with equal *nonchalance* to either fortune? Quite the contrary. His tone and language are rather those of a pettish schoolboy, who, being compelled against his will to study his lesson, purposely neglects it, recites it of course imperfectly, and is punished at night for his want of attention. If our author must work, he will do as little, and that little as carelessly, as possible.

'If compelled,' says he, 'to renounce the pleasures of independence and the charms of Epicurean indulgence, I should attach no importance to the choice of a profession. Not being able to do what I wished (that is, nothing,) it would be indifferent to me what I did. I should, however, carefully avoid all lucrative and brilliant employments involving responsibility and care. After sacrificing every day the number of hours absolutely necessary to furnish me with the means of subsistence, I should devote the rest to enjoyment, my main object being, not to become rich, but to be happy.'

We shall not quarrel with our author, on the score of his indifference to the choice of his profession, or of his

avowed preference for an obscure occupation over a brilliant one. The feeling may doubtless be carried to excess. Few persons of good sense would take as much satisfaction in flourishing a chimney-sweeper's brush on the housetop, as in leading the debates in the councils of a nation. But leaving out of view extremes on either side, it may be safely enough admitted, that individuals, exercising such employments as naturally place them in the middle walks of life, enjoy, on the whole, as large a share of happiness as any others. If their delights be less exquisite, their sufferings, under the common lot of humanity, are also proportionally less acute, and their condition possesses in stability what it wants in brilliancy. The choice between the kind of tranquil well-being, which a man enjoys in such a situation, and the glorious but often agonizing struggles, the alternations of triumph and despair, that attend on those who pursue their way along the stormy summits of social life, is a matter of taste and character, rather than of principle. One man, as Horace says, delights in raising a cloud of Olympic dust around his conquering car, while another is satisfied with a quiet pinch of snuff in his little back parlor.

‘The eagle and the stork

On cliffs and cedar tops their eyries build ;’

while the swan,

‘with arched neck

Beneath her white wings mantling proudly,’

bathes her downy breast in the smooth waters of a silver lake, or sails in graceful majesty along its green velvet margin, without envying the superior elevation of others. There is room in the world for all God's creatures, and the difference in their tastes is rather a fortunate thing, as it serves to prevent competition and promote the general harmony.

But while we allow to Mr Droz all the latitude upon this point which he can reasonably wish, we must decidedly enter our protest against the other part of the doctrine set forth in the above extract. Has our author fully considered what he is saying, when he recommends to his disciples to take no interest in their employment, whatever it may be; to work at it carelessly and negligently, just long enough to obtain a bare living, and then hurry home to bed, or to the tavern to keep *Saint Monday*? Meeting him on his own ground, and taking our examples from the middling and lower walks of life, does Mr Droz really mean to tell us, that a tailor, for instance, will best consult his happiness by working as little as possible at his trade, receiving as few orders as he can, executing those which he receives in a careless manner, disappointing his customers in the time of sending home their clothes, and instead of wielding incessantly the shears and needle, passing most of his precious hours in spinning street-yarn? Is that barber in a fair way to realize the *summum bonum*, who intentionally hacks the chins of the public with dull and wretched razors, or burns their ears with his curling tongs, on purpose to deter as many of them as he can from coming into his shop? Admitting for argument's sake (what no honorable man would allow for a moment), that the only object of exercising a profession is to obtain a bare subsistence; is it not perfectly clear, that an artist, who should follow the system of our author, would completely fail, even in this miserable purpose? If a tailor send home a coat awkwardly and unfashionably cut, or negligently made up, the indignant customer forthwith returns it on his hands, and transfers his order to a more industrious and attentive workman. From making a few coats, and those badly, the recreant knight of the shears would very soon come to have none at all to



make, and would inevitably starve by the side of his cold goose, upon a vacant shopboard. A barber, in like manner, who should adopt the ingenious practices alluded to above, for clearing his shop of the surplus number of long beards, would not probably find the ebbing tide stop exactly at the point, necessary for supplying him with bread and bedclothes. He would soon find himself, like Ossian's aged heroes, lonely in his hall. From keeping his own shop, he would be compelled to enter as journeyman in that of another, and by continuing to pursue the same process, would sink in succession through the several gradations of house-servant, street porter, and vagabond, into the hospital, the port where all who sail by our author's chart and compass will naturally bring up. The only way, in fact, by which a man can expect to turn his labor to account, in any occupation, is by doing the best he can, and by putting his heart into his business, whatever it may be. He then takes the rank, among his brothers of the trade, to which his talents entitle him; and if he cannot rise to the head of his art, he will at least be respectable, and will realize an honorable living. It is not every barber that can aspire to the fame of a Smallpeace, a Higgins, or a Williams; but any one who is diligent and assiduous in his shop, and who takes a just pride in seeing his customers leave it with glossy chins, well dressed hair, and neatly shaped *favorites*, should his natural aptitude be even something less than first-rate, will yet never want the comforts of life for himself and his family through the week, his five dollar bill to deposit in the savings bank on Saturday evening, and his extra joint to entertain a brother Strap on Sunday. And while he thus realizes an ample revenue, the zealous and attentive artist reaps, as he goes along through life, the best reward of his labor in the pleasure afforded him by the gratification of

his honest pride, and the approbation of his fellow citizens. A high-minded tailor feels as much satisfaction in seeing a well made coat go out of his shop, as the dandy to whom it is sent, in putting it on, for the first time, to appear at an assembly. And when (as may often happen in our blessed country) the artist meets his customer in the fashionable circle, and finds his work commended by acknowledged connoisseurs; when he listens to the praises bestowed upon the knowing cut of the collar, the nice adjustment of the body, and the graceful fall of the skirts, his heart dilates with a secret rapture, which is worth ten times as much to him as the profit he makes upon the article. It differs specifically only, but not in kind, from that which, as the poet tells us, was felt by the goddess Latona, when she saw her daughter Diana,

‘The silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,’

leading up the dances of the mountain nymphs upon the banks of the river Eurotas, or the top of Mount Cynthus, and excelling them all in grace and beauty ;

‘Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per jûga Cynthi,  
Exercet Diana choros ; quam mille secutæ  
Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades ; illa pharetram  
Fert humero, gradiensque deas supereminet omnes :  
Latonæ tacitum pertendant gaudia pectus.’

These gratifications Mr Droz loses for the sake of his *dolce far niente* ; and, like Shakespeare with his quibblô, is content to lose them. Next to idleness, he seems to consider disregard for public opinion as the principal means for obtaining happiness.

‘Tis a great folly,’ he remarks, ‘to expect to be happy, and at the same time to obtain the general approbation. Hypocrites may protest against this doctrine, and certain feeble souls may inquire if it be not dangerous to preach up contempt for public opinion. I answer, No! provided we are sufficiently resolute

and firm in our purpose. 'T is a truth, which we should never cease to present, in a thousand forms, to the minds of youth, that happiness requires courage. There might, perhaps, be some risk for those who follow only a part of my prescriptions ; but those who obey the whole, are safe.'

The desire to excel, and obtain the favorable opinion of others, is of course inadmissible on this system, and is denounced in unequivocal terms.

'An indispensable condition for obtaining happiness, is to shut the soul against ambition. If I yield to ambition, I must quit my retirement, renounce the pleasures which I derive from the society of my family and friends, and from my *liberal occupations*. No more delicious morning reveries ! I must no more live for myself ; in quitting my obscurity, I resign repose and independence.'

We may remark here that Mr Droz, notwithstanding his previous warm eulogies on the pleasures of idleness, is unable to make out a picture of a happy life for himself, without including his *liberal occupations* ; and thus renounces inadvertently his own declared doctrine, and comes back to the one recommended by the common sense of the world, at the very moment when he is urging us to despise public opinion. But in giving this last somewhat hazardous counsel, has Mr Droz duly weighed all the consequences of the line of conduct which he advised us to pursue ? Has he fully considered the well known remark of one of his own distinguished fellow countrymen upon this subject ? *Il y a quelqu'un, said the Prince de Talleyrand, qui est plus fort que Napoléon, et qui a plus d'esprit que Voltaire,—c' est tout le monde.* 'There is somebody' (the language is so idiomatical as hardly to bear translation), 'there is somebody who has more power than Napoleon, and more wit than Voltaire,—that is, everybody.' The Prince is clearly of opinion,

that this terrible *somebody* is not to be trifled with; and M. de Talleyrand is a person of so much talent and experience that he ought to be heard with great attention. The result has, in fact, established the truth of this remark, as far as Napoleon is concerned; since by defying public opinion, he reduced himself from the loftiest height of fortune that any mortal has ever attained, to perish miserably on a burning rock in the middle of the ocean. Is Mr Droz quite sure that his disciples, by following even the whole of his prescriptions, will come off with flying colors from a conflict that proved fatal to this political Colossus?

'There is no danger,' replies our author, 'provided we are sufficiently firm and resolute. We have only to take courage; and all will be well.' These are bold words, but are they proportionally just? Did courage restore to Napoleon the empire he had lost? Would it rescue an overdone tailor from the hospital, replace him in his shop and gather round him anew his train of offended customers? Will courage feed and clothe a poor man and his family? Will it pay his rent, and serve him to settle his weekly bill at the baker's and the butcher's? Can he deposit courage in the savings bank? We all know that courage, though an excellent thing in its place, will answer none of these purposes. The error of Mr Droz, in this part of his system, seems to be, in taking it for granted that the only unpleasant effect of despising others is to be despised by them in turn; a moral evil, against which the moral remedy, courage, might be expected to afford some relief. *Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo.* But the real objection to the theory is (as we have already shown), that contempt for public opinion brings upon a man material and physical ruin in all its worst shapes; and this is a case in which the moral specific, recommended by our author, loses all its virtue;

'Who can hold a fire in his hand,  
By *thinking* on the frosty Caucasus?  
Or wallow naked in December's snows,  
By *dreaming* on fantastic summer's heat?'

But as we wish to give our author every advantage in the argument, that he can possibly desire, let us meet him on his own ground; and in order to try with precision the correctness of his doctrine, as he understands it, let us suppose an example, in which the immediate consequences of contempt for public opinion, are in fact, no more than to encounter in turn the contempt of the public. Let us take the case of a schoolboy, or a student at college, who happens to meet with *The Art of Being Happy*, and finds himself exhorted to cultivate a habit of idleness, as the best method of attaining this desirable object; and to despise the opinion of the world, or, in other words, to disregard the advice and reproof of his parents and instructors, which might probably be opposed to our author's system.

'Why,' says Mr Droz, 'waste your precious hours, and wear out your young eyes, in fagging over old books? Why immure yourself this fine weather in a close and crowded school? It is surely far pleasanter to pursue your sports with your merry mates in the open air upon the green. Your instructors and parents may, perhaps, reprove you for absence, or for keeping at the foot of the class, and some of your fellow students may possibly ridicule your stupidity. But why should you regard the prosing of a musty old pedagogue, or the gibes of a group of thoughtless boys? Of what consequence is it to you, whether you take your place at one end or the other of the file, in which they are drawn up to recite? Be of good heart, and if they laugh at you, laugh at them in turn. Take your own course; be idle and be happy.'

This doctrine would sound pretty well in the ears of our supposed pupil, who would also find no difficulty in

reducing it to practice. Nor would he suffer immediately in this case, in consequence of his contempt for public opinion, any considerable diminution of his material comforts. The sunshine of paternal affection, like that of Providence, illuminates (for a while, at least,) with equal favor the evil and the good; and our young idler would probably be fed, clothed, and lodged, as well as his busier brothers and sisters. For a few days, the experiment might appear to have perfectly succeeded. But when examination comes, at the week's end; when our infant Epicurean sees the prizes for good behavior and superior attainments, distributed to others, and nothing awarded to himself but notes of infamy; when the honored father looks coldly on him, and the kind mother has no smile of consolation, while the merry and mischievous urchins about him are all in high glee, at his expense;—Mr Droz may say what he pleases about *courage*, but we are after all not stocks and stones; nature, we apprehend, would have her way, and

‘in spite of scorn,  
Tears, such as *schoolboys* weep, burst forth.’

But grant the contrary; grant that our little philosopher brazens it out manfully, and gives no external signs of palling in resolution. Grant that he shows all the courage that Mr Droz could desire; that he proves himself a hero, a martyr in the cause; grant this, and what follows? Is martyrdom happiness? The precise object of our author, as we understand it, is to avoid painful efforts of all kinds, and lead an easy, *sans souci* life; but we are now called upon to exercise courage, fortitude, and long suffering, in order to be able to endure his Epicurean paradise. Does not our author feel, that the call for courage supposes of itself, that we are in presence of pain and difficulty, instead of ease and pleasure?

Does it require so much fortitude to support prosperity? so much long-suffering, to bear up under a course of uninterrupted happiness? Does a man brace his nerves, and steel his heart, to encounter a comfortable fire, a good dinner, and a circle of smiling friends? Our author invites us to recline upon a bed of roses, and when we accept his proffer, and put ourselves into his hands, he stretches us out upon St Lawrence's gridiron. This result agrees sufficiently with the moral of the ancient apologues of the strait and the broad ways, the rocky and the flowery paths, that conduct respectively to life and death; but we hardly expected to hear the same doctrine from Mr Droz. In this, as in the other instance, the latter end of our author's commonwealth forgets the beginning.

It appears, therefore, by the admission of Mr Droz, that the contempt of public opinion, which he so strongly recommends, leads to nothing better than the crown of martyrdom; a situation to which, however enviable it may be, in some respects and in some causes, few would aspire as the *ne plus ultra* of ease and comfort. On the other hand, the feeling of respect for the judgment of the world, which leads us to endeavor to excel in such arts and qualities as may render us agreeable and useful to others, does not seem to be productive of any equally serious inconveniences. The apprehensions of our author in regard to this point are, we think, exaggerated. 'In quitting my obscurity,' says he, 'I resign at the same time, repose and independence. No more delicious morning reveries; I must no longer live for myself.' If, by repose and independence as the words are here used, our author mean complete idleness; if he have no other notion of happiness, than that of turning every morning for two or three hours in his bed, as a door turneth on its hinges, there is of course nothing more to be said. Happiness, thus refined,

is doubtless incompatible with honorable distinction, in any line of life ; but even on this view of the subject, it might be pertinently asked, whether the sacrifice of ease, required by respect for public opinion, be worse than the martyrdom which it seems we must suffer by despising it. If, however, our author means, by repose and independence, what men of sense generally intend by these words, that is rest after labor, and the occupying of a favorable and commanding position in society, we conceive that these advantages, instead of being incompatible with the attainment of honorable distinction, are its natural consequences and rewards. Persons of eminence in the various walks of life, are doubtless much employed because the value of their services is known ; but this, to a man of right feeling, to one whose heart is in his business, is not dependence and drudgery, as Mr Droz seems to think it ; 'tis itself a pleasure, *labor ipse voluptas*. The healthy excitement of arguing an important case and thereby securing the rights of an injured fellow citizen, of pleading the cause of truth and justice before the assembled councils of a nation, affords a pleasure, if our author did but know it, which would be well worth the sacrifice of one of his brightest morning dreams.

As to independence, does our author mean to be understood, that a person who has attained a high distinction in any honorable pursuit, is less favorably situated in the usual relations of social life, than those about him ? On our view of the subject, such a person is *par excellence* the truly independent man. He can do for each individual, what no individual can do for him. His convenience, therefore, must be consulted by all. If he choose to labor, he selects the time, the place, and the manner, at his discretion. The favored mortal for whom he works, is too happy in obtaining his aid, to pretend to have an opinion about the manner in which it is to be



given. He performs himself the interesting and important parts of the task, and assigns the rest to subalterns. When he has finished, he sets his price upon what he has done, and whatever it may be, it is paid with a sentiment of gratitude, and not of superiority. What citizen of the United States did not feel himself deeply obliged, when Canova and Chantrey sent us out their admirable images of the majestic form of the father of our country? Who ever dreamed, that the service was in any way requited by the payments which these illustrious men may have consented to receive in return? It is easy to judge of this by the tone and language employed on these occasions. 'Here, my worthy fellow,' (such, in substance is the manner in which we apply to an ordinary hand) 'here is a piece of work, which I am willing to put into your hands, if you will perform it at a reasonable rate; if not, I shall give it to some one else, for there are enough others who can do it as well.' When we address an artist or professional person of eminence, the style is different. 'My noble friend, I am in the greatest possible embarrassment, and you are the only person who can extricate me from it. Your assistance is indispensable to me. Let me beg you to undertake the business, and make your own terms.' Who, then, in such a case, is the dependent, and who the independent man? Mr Droz certainly takes a false view of this matter. Independence is peculiarly the attribute of those, who enjoy a merited distinction in any department of agreeable or useful labor. As they pass through the world, they are constantly distributing favors on every side, and the people look up to them as public benefactors, and delight to do them honor. As the Muses in Virgil's eclogue stood up in presence of the poet Gallus,

Uliqe viro Phœbi chorus assurrexerit omnis,

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so the Roman people, by a charming application of his own verses, rose with one accord to salute the Mantuan himself, when he appeared at the theatre. And as to repose, when they wish to indulge in it (which is not so often or for so long periods, as our author would probably think necessary), the business of the world (for no one else can do it) must await their leisure. Cicero, at the height of the practising season, at a time when, as he says in his letters, hardly a day passed in which he did not argue some cause, could retire for two or three weeks together from the forum and recreate himself in his quiet Cuman villa, by enjoying the fresh breezes from the Tuscan ocean, that rolled below his windows, and composing his celebrated six books upon Government. The leisure of those great men of antiquity seems to have been more productive, than the working hours of the worthies of this degenerate age. Even the caprices of distinguished men must be indulged, because their aid must in many cases be secured at all hazards. When Achilles in a fit of ill humor quits the Grecian army, and holds himself aloof in his tent, the king of men after attempting in vain to go on without him, is compelled to yield the point in question (however delicate), and court him back with more messages, than the other chiefs are willing to carry. The deep diplomacy of Ulysses, the uncompromising frankness of Ajax, the fatherly affection of Phoenix, and the garrulous wisdom of the aged Nestor are all put in requisition, in fruitless endeavors to persuade the haughty youth to make peace on his own terms. Something similar to this would probably happen in most other cases of the same description.

There is therefore, we think, but little foundation for the fears of Mr Droz, that in quitting obscurity, he shall renounce at the same time repose and independence. Instead of agreeing with him in considering a contempt

for public opinion as one of the principal elements of happiness, we should rather say (like the generous old Roman when he first heard the same Epicurean doctrine expounded by a Greek philosopher), 'May the gods give such principles to our enemies.' To our friends we should rather recommend (in conformity to the wisdom of ages) to seek the good opinion of others, and to aim at a just and honorable distinction. Such was the parting counsel of his aged father to Achilles, when he sent him forth, under the care of Nestor and Ulysses, to accompany the Greeks to the siege of Troy ;

Πηλεὺς μὲν ᾧ πατρὶ γέροντι πέτελλ' Ἀχιλλεΐ,  
 Ἄλιν ἀριστεύειν, καὶ ἑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.

Such is the import of the sublime exhortation of the Catholic Missal, *Sursum corda*, which is quoted with such distinct approbation by Burke, as pure and lofty a spirit as ever wore the vestments of mortality. There is doubtless a base passion, sometimes called ambition, which, instead of seeking to rise itself, endeavors to obtain a comparative elevation above others by depressing them, by fraud or force, below its own sordid level, and which justly excites the indignation and contempt of the wise. But the wish to arrive at excellence in noble pursuits by noble means, can hardly be carried to an excess. 'Tis the foe of idleness and frivolous employments ; it tempers the thirst for sensual indulgence, nourishes high contemplations and generous feelings, and as far as it attains its objects, works out nothing but direct and positive good to the individual and to the world.

In reply to the objections which we have taken the liberty to make to his theory, Mr Droz may allege his own experience as a proof of its correctness. From his account he is one of the few physicians who follow their own prescriptions, and find themselves the better for it.

'Some persons will perhaps ask, if he who pretends to teach the art of being happy, has been always happy himself. I reply, that having been blessed with a share of philosophy and favored in some degree by circumstances, I have thus far found in life more pleasure than pain. But who can hope for unmingled happiness? I must own that I have at times been through a good deal of trouble. I have sometimes neglected to act upon my own principles, and in professing to instruct others, I am perhaps like a pilot, who should undertake to give lessons in navigation, after having repeatedly run his ship on shore.'

We have some misgivings from this account of the matter, that Mr Droz has not been a vast deal happier than the rest of us, who have generally experienced like him alternate showers and sunshine. Be that as it may, our author, we think, labors under an illusion, in attributing the happiness he has enjoyed to an entire want of occupation and a contempt for public opinion. Although he may not have exercised any regular profession, he has given satisfactory evidence of a laudable degree of activity, in the singular employment of recommending idleness to others. The work before us, if it be not thought to demonstrate his good sense, is at least a proof of his industry. His *Essay on Moral Philosophy, or the Different Theories of the Art of Living*, is another; his *Studies on the Beautiful in Art*, a third; his *Eulogy on Montaigne*, a fourth; and so of his various other writings. Mr Droz is, in short, a person who cultivates letters with zeal and assiduity in his own way. This pursuit is after all an occupation *tout comme un autre*, and in some cases one of the most honorable and useful, in which a man can engage. We put it to our author's conscience, whether the delicious morning reveries, of which he makes so much account, are always devoted literally to reflections on the pleasure of having nothing to do through the day; whether they are not sometimes taken up in meditations

on the forthcoming work. Mr Droz talks at his ease of the *dolce far niente*, with his books around him, and his manuscript open on his writing-table. But let his study be locked up; let him be debarred from the use of pen, ink, and paper; let him be excluded from reading-rooms and public libraries,—let all this continue for a few weeks and he will hold, we suspect, a different language. We should probably find him laboring under the same disease, which carried off the comrade of the Marquis of Spinola. Nor do we believe, that he can allege his own experience in support of his recommendation of contempt for public opinion with greater justice. It is remarked by Cicero, that the very philosophers who advise us to despise the opinion of the world, put their names to the books containing this counsel. Our author, we are sorry to say, is an example of this inconsistency. Upon turning to the beginning of this article (where the titlepage of the work before us is copied), the reader will see at full length the name of *Joseph Droz*, inserted as that of the author. After the mention of his christian and family names, follows the honorary addition of *Member of the French Academy*. He is willing we should know that his *art* has enabled him to scale the celestial towers occupied by the *Forty Immortals*, who preside over the world of French literature, and take his place among the number. Even this is not all. After the qualification *de l'Académie Française*, we next find the significant memorandum, *Quatrième Edition*, 'Fourth Edition.' Is this then the end, or rather the beginning, of our author's superb indifference? Why should Mr Droz, who holds the judgment of the many so very cheap, be at the pains of informing us that they have taken off three editions of his book? \* Is it consistent in one who scorns the suf-

\* One of our author's books (if we are not mistaken, the work now before us) obtained the prize which had been offered by the French Academy

frage of his fellows, to proclaim upon the house-top, that he has been received into the French Academy? Did it become this contemner of public opinion to indulge in the petty vanity of being known as a writer? The truth seems to be, that our author, while recommending to his disciples the 'primrose path of dalliance,' has had the good sense to pursue himself with some degree of firmness 'the steep and thorny road;' and while advising others to despise public opinion, has made no scruple of doing everything in his power to conciliate it in his own favor. This management appears at first view singular, and upon a second may be thought suspicious. *Timeo Danaos.* Is Mr Droz endeavoring to put us to sleep that he may have the field entirely to himself? At all events, we like his example better than his precepts.

It is time, however, to close our colloquy with this writer, which we have already continued somewhat longer than we at first intended. Beside the chapters to which we have particularly adverted, there are several more upon a considerable variety of subjects; such as Pleasure, Pain, Love, Hatred, Melancholy, Marriage, Life, Death, and others of equal moment. They are all treated with nearly the same success, but we have not room to comment upon them in detail. In combating the arguments of our author, in favor of idleness and contempt of public opinion, we have had occasion to intimate that, on our view of the subject, his theory is directly the reverse of the truth, and that a diligent pursuit of almost any honest occupation, and a decent regard for the judgment of those around us, are among the most effective means, that we can employ, for the attainment of happiness. We may add here, that the real *art of* for the most valuable publication in a *moral* point of view, that should appear during the year. *Credite, posteri.*

*being happy* is nowhere stated in a more satisfactory form than in the *Ten Commandments* of the Old Testament, and the *Two* into which they are abridged in the New. The person who shall diligently and faithfully practise upon these digests, will have but little need of the assistance of Mr Droz. A good familiar and practical exposition of the spirit of these approved codes is to be found in the common saying, *The art of being happy, is to endeavor to make other people so*; to which the most judicious philosophers have subjoined as a supplementary principle, *that a man is never happy without a good wife.*

## LIFE AND WORKS OF CANOVA.\*

[North American Review, October, 1822.]

IN a preceding number of this journal,† was some account of the principal events in the life of Canova, and of the most remarkable among the multiplied productions of his chisel. Not long after the article containing it appeared, the grave closed over this celebrated artist, who died at Venice on the thirteenth of October, 1822, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, universally lamented throughout the civilized world, as one of those rare individuals whose extraordinary and unrivalled genius throws a lustre on the period in which they live, and whose loss is, in the nature of things, altogether irreparable. The biographical memoirs and collections of engravings of his works, which have appeared since his death, supply materials for a somewhat ampler notice than we were then able to furnish; and we avail ourselves with pleasure of the opportunity for rendering complete justice to the memory of this great artist, who has particularly recommended himself to the attention of Americans, by consecrating one of his works to the honor of our political saviour and father. A tribute of this kind is the more necessary in this country, because

\* *The Works of Antonio Canova in Sculpture and Modelling, engraved in Outline by Henry Moses, with Descriptions from the Italian of the Countess Albrizzi, and a Biographical Memoir by Count Cicognara.* 2 vols. folio. London. 1824.

† North American Review, Vol. x, p. 372.



the British journalists, with their characteristic jealousy of all foreign excellence, have studiously underrated the merit of Canova, even since his death, in the vain attempt to give their own countryman, Chantrey, a preëminence over him, which that justly distinguished and amiable sculptor would himself as little dream of claiming, as any competent judge of assigning it to him. One of the publications, from which we drew the materials for our former article on this subject, was the series of descriptions of the works of Canova by the Countess Albrizzi of Venice; and we mentioned, in the course of our remarks, that that lady had announced the intention of publishing a collection of engravings of them, with a biography by herself of her illustrious countryman and friend. The work now before us, although no satisfactory account is given of its origin by the British editors, appears to be a reprint, in an English dress, of the one which Madame Albrizzi has probably published in pursuance of this intention, but which has not yet reached us. It contains a complete collection of engravings in outline of all the productions of Canova, accompanied by the commentaries of this lady, and by a biography, which is, however, not from her pen, but that of Count Cicognara, a Venetian nobleman, well known to the world by his literary talent and taste in the fine arts. The descriptions of Madame Albrizzi are of a poetical rather than critical character, and probably appear to more advantage in their original shape, than in the present translation, which, however, is not a bad one. The biography is a judicious and unpretending narrative of the leading incidents in a life of exclusive and untiring devotion to art, of which the best and only faithful record is to be found in the charming productions of the artist. We propose, in the present article, to lay before our readers a concise sketch of these events, with such

observations on the works of Canova as may be suggested by the descriptions and engravings here given of them, or by the personal survey which we have had opportunity to take of some of the most remarkable among the number.

Canova was a native of Possagno, a village situated near the city of Asolo at the foot of the Venetian Alps. The talent for sculpture was hereditary in his family, having been exercised by his father and grandfather with a good degree of success in the construction of monuments, altars, and other works, mostly for the interior decoration of the churches in their neighborhood. His father died while Canova was yet an infant, and it was from his grandfather, who still continued at a very advanced age the practice of the art, that he received his first instruction in the mechanical part of it. The peculiar aptitude which he exhibited under these circumstances, attracted the attention of several noblemen of taste, in the immediate vicinity of his native village, who supplied the young sculptor with the means of removing to Venice and studying under the first artists of that city, which he accordingly did, at about fourteen years of age. He began very early to exhibit, both in the choice of his subjects and in his mode of treating them, the lofty spirit and correct taste which afterwards raised him to the head of his art. His *Orpheus* and *Eurydice*, which were executed in his sixteenth and seventeenth years, though inferior to his later productions, excited in a singular degree the admiration of his countrymen, and announced the dawn of a genius of the highest promise. They are still preserved in the palace of his earliest patron, the Patrician Giovanni Falieri, at Asolo. The success of these and several other groups and statues, which he executed not long after, encouraged his friends to afford him the opportunity of studying at Rome, — the central point,

and as it were, metropolis of the fine-arts. He was accordingly placed there at the close of the year 1780, under the protection of the Venetian ambassador, the Chevalier Girolamo Zulian. As a provision for the expenses of his residence at Rome, the government of his native republic voted him an annual pension of three hundred ducats for three years.

Such were the circumstances under which Canova entered on his brilliant career. From this time forward he passed his life, with the exception of occasional short excursions for recreation or business, in his workshop at Rome, where he continued his labors with uninterrupted assiduity through the whole series of political revolutions which shook the world around him, and swept into their vortex almost every other individual of any note or talent in Italy. No clearer proof could be given of the absorbing and unconquerable passion for his art with which he was possessed, and which alone could have raised him to the distinction he attained. He was aware, before he left Venice, of the great inferiority of the modern style of sculpture, and had already fixed his eyes on the pure and perfect models of antiquity. In this correct taste he was confirmed and encouraged, upon his arrival at Rome, as well by his own observations upon the works of art, which he there saw, as by the advice and opinion of the best judges from all parts of Europe, whom he met with in that city. After allowing him a sufficient time to prepare himself by a proper course of study, for new efforts, the Venetian ambassador placed at his disposal a fine block of marble, and invited him to execute, upon a subject of his own choice, a work which should furnish a specimen of the improvement that he had derived from his residence at Rome. Canova, laboring in the palace and under the eye of the ambassador, who has thus associated his name with the glory of his *protégé*, converted

this block of marble into the group of Theseus and the Minotaur,—the first of his works in which he exhibited the maturity of his talent. This production realized the highest expectations entertained by the patrons of the young artist ; and the execution of it may be said to form an epoch in the history of modern sculpture. The circumstances attending this interesting moment in the life of Canova, are related by his biographer in the following terms ;

‘ On his arrival at Rome, Canova had experienced the kindest reception from the Venetian ambassador, and had free access to his splendid mansion. This enlightened and accomplished nobleman, soon becoming impressed with a high sense of the merit and powers of the young sculptor, procured from Venice a cast in plaster of the group of Dædalus and Icarus, which he had executed in that city for the purpose of exhibiting it to the artists and connoisseurs at Rome. The house of the ambassador was, indeed a kind of atheneum, and frequented by all the persons most distinguished by talents and genius in that city. On the occasion of the first production of this group, he was surrounded by Cades, Volpato, Battoni, Gavin Hamilton, Puceini, and many other distinguished artists and critics, who contemplated the work with silent astonishment, not daring to censure what, although at variance with the style then followed, commanded their admiration, and revealed the brightest prospects. The embarrassment of the youth at this juncture was extreme, and he frequently spoke of it afterwards as one of the most anxious moments of his life. From this state he was, however, soon relieved by the friendly and paternal address of Gavin Hamilton, exciting him to unite with so exact and beautiful an imitation of nature the fine taste and *beau idéal* of the ancients, of which Rome contained so many models ; predicting at the same time, that by such a course he would greatly pass the limits which had been reached by the moderns. But the censure which he overheard from one who stood behind him was more agreeable to the young artist than any direct eulogium. This Aristarchus observed, that from the effect produced on the ob-

server by the naked forms so carefully finished in this group, they must have been moulded upon a living subject, when in reality they were wholly the result of his severe study of the human form, entirely unassisted by mechanical means. This greatly encouraged the young artist, and convinced him that he had already raised himself above the mediocrity of his contemporaries.

‘From the moment of his arrival at Rome, he had commenced a severe and profound study of the great models of ancient art, without, however, neglecting the fruits of his previous close observation of nature, the expression of which he always proposed to himself to make a distinguished quality in his works. He had a profound contempt for all conventional modes in the arts, and was led, even in that early age, by a correct taste, rather than by instructions, to prefer, among the monuments of ancient art, those which were of the age of Phidias, in which the lofty conceptions of the artist are more closely united with truth of expression,—a decision which has since been fully confirmed by the exhibition made to Europe by the British Museum of the first certain monuments of the arts of that era.

‘It may be proper to take here a slight survey of the various circumstances which had promoted the improvement in the arts previously to the arrival of Canova at Rome; for the influence of the genius of one man could not have been wholly adequate to the reconducting of art into its true but forsaken paths, unless the approach to them had been cleared by the sound judgment of some of his predecessors, and without the aid of other favoring circumstances. Indeed the influence of established practice and professional jealousy created no trifling obstacles to the progress of Canova. These, however, his modest and unassuming conduct aided greatly to remove, while an air of triumph and superiority would, by wounding the feelings of his rivals, have created additional opposition. Already, however, many causes had existed, tending to an improvement in the arts. Among them may be enumerated the encouragement to right studies given by the Marquess Tanucci at Naples, the protection afforded to literature, and the arts at the courts of Charles the Third, Leopold, Benedict the Fourteenth, Pius the

Sixth, and by Cardinal Silvio Valenti, the Colbert of the Holy See; by the Albani, the Zelada, and the Borgia; the studies of Mazzochi, Bajardi, Galliani, of the two Venuti, of Maffei, Gesnero, Gori, Passeri, Paoli, and Amaduzzi; the good taste diffused by Cochin, Bellicard, Burlington, Mariette, and Sir William Hamilton; the Herculanean discoveries; the travels of St Non, Norden, Pocock, Wheeler, Spon, Revet, and Stuart; the exact admeasurement of ancient architecture by Des Godetz; the masterly works of the Piranesi on the antiquities of Rome; the illustration and rendering public of galleries and museums by means of engravings; the opening of baths; the study of the galleries of the Vatican; the excavation of old edifices; the collection and illustration of old inscriptions by Morcelli, Marini, Zoega, Fea, and Akerblad; the great works of Visconti and Winkleman; the enlightened taste of the Earl of Bristol, and of the Ambassador D'Azara, for these studies; the genius and profound erudition of Hancarville; the valuable collections of Hamilton, Jenkins, and Agincourt; the perfection of the intaglios of Pickler; the fine and bold designs of Flaxman; the attraction given to these studies by the accomplished Algarotti; the triumph over prejudices of the formidable Milizia; the labors of Temanza and Lanzi. — These all supplied immense sources of aid to the young Phidias, and seemed to him to point out that moment as the favorable one for giving a different direction to sculpture from that which was pursued by living masters.

‘It is remarkable, that both sculpture and architecture should at this time owe their revival to the genius of the Venetians; for while Canova was executing his first great works at Rome, Ottone Calderari was reviving the Grecian taste in Vicenza, and Querenghi, at St Petersburg, was fulfilling, in a masterly style, the magnificent views of that imperial court, by the erection of sumptuous and elegant edifices of every description. It must be allowed, however, that no ordinary degree of genius and courage was required to break loose from the false and vicious rules of art which then prevailed, particularly in sculpture, as not one of his contemporaries had, with all the incitements which have been enumerated, yet advanced a single

step in that direction. Indeed the works which Canova first saw at Rome, the productions of Agostino Penna, Pacili, Bracci, Sibilla, Pacetti, and Angilini are already fallen into total neglect; neither can we discover in them the source of the slightest excitement to the improved style which the Venetian pupil afterwards acquired.

'The Chevalier Zulian now saw the importance of giving effective assistance to the developing powers of Canova. He therefore placed at his command a fine block of marble, to be devoted to a subject of his own choice, and to show the profit derived from his residence and studies at Rome. This was the first marble sculptured by Canova on those true principles by which he had proposed to himself to be guided in his works; a composition by which a new path was opened to all the productions of the imitative arts. The subject which he chose was Theseus, conqueror of the Minotaur, and the work was conducted throughout in the palace of the Venetian ambassador. It was a highly interesting moment, when his excellent patron produced a cast of the head only of the Theseus to a party of the first artists and critics assembled in his house, without informing them whence it had been obtained. All concurred, however varying in other points, in pronouncing it to be of Grecian workmanship; and many thought they had seen the marble from which it had been taken, not being able, however, to recollect exactly where it was. But when the ambassador conducted them before the original and entire group, their surprise was indeed extreme, and they were forced to exclaim, that by this work art had commenced a new career. On this occasion it may be said, that Theseus was the conqueror, not only of the Minotaur, but of Envy also, forcing from his rival artists the first homage of their admiration of Canova, who at so early an age had raised art to a higher degree of perfection than had been attained by any sculptor since its revival in Italy.'

In this group the Minotaur is represented, according to some of the traditions, with the body of a man and the head of a bull. The contest is already decided, and the

lifeless carcass of the fallen monster is carelessly thrown over a rock, which thus furnishes a natural pedestal to the group. The young conqueror is seated on the body, resting his right hand on one of the thighs, and holding in his left the club with which he has achieved his victory. His shoulders are thrown back a little as if he were reposing from a strong effort, while with his head gently inclining forward he fixes a look of proud satisfaction on the face of his antagonist. The subject of this work is very happily chosen. The uncouth form of the monster, while it gives variety to the figures, furnishes a fine foil to the exquisitely symmetrical shape of the hero. The attitudes of both are perfectly easy, and are also such as to give a unity and pyramidical appearance to the group, which are always pleasing qualities when they naturally result from the subject. The action represented, — a prince, in the flower of youth and beauty, adventuring his life in an almost desperate conflict for the purpose of delivering his country from a savage imposition, — is fitted to awaken emotions which tend to increase the effect of the work. The figure and countenance of Theseus are in the highest style of manly beauty. The features express the stern delight of triumph, mingled with contempt for the brutal enemy. As the situation is substantially the same, so the predominant expression of the features was probably borrowed from that of the Apollo Belvidere, who is supposed to be represented as having just slain the serpent Python with an arrow. The division of the lips, and the disdainful curl of the upper one, are seen alike in both; but the difference in the attitudes removes the appearance of anything like servile imitation in Canova, who has in fact done no more than indicate, by its natural expression, the same sentiment which is shown in the face of the Apollo. The Perseus, one of his later productions, is a



direct copy of the celebrated antique statue in question, but is perhaps a less successful exhibition of the talent of the artist than the Theseus. The Countess Albrizzi expresses in strong terms her admiration of the beauty of this statue. 'Men,' says she, 'who behold it, would fain resemble Theseus, while the fairer sex experience all the emotions of Ariadne.'

We have dwelt at some length on this group, because, while it is in itself one of the most finished productions of the chisel of Canova, it is particularly remarkable as the one which opened the series of his mature efforts. It is now, we believe, in possession of Count de Fries, a banker at Vienna, of the house to which our countryman, Mr David Parish, was attached. The talent exhibited in the Theseus gave celebrity at once to the name of Canova, and he was immediately engaged to execute a monument to the memory of Pope Clement the Fourteenth (Ganganelli), in the church of the Holy Apostles at Rome. The complete success with which he acquitted himself of this honorable and arduous commission, is attested, for those who trust more to the judgment of professed connoisseurs than their own, by the following letter, in which the *formidable* Milizia, — as he is called in the above extract, — a critic not less distinguished for the uncompromising severity of his judgment, than for the perfection of his taste, expressed his opinion of the monument of Ganganelli soon after its erection in 1787.

'In the church of the Holy Apostles, near to the Sacristy, and fronting to one of the side aisles, a mausoleum has been erected to the late Pope Ganganelli, by Antonio Canova, a Venitian sculptor. So great is the simplicity of this composition, that it seems all felicity, but it is nevertheless full of talent and difficulty. What repose! what elegance! what harmony! Both the sculptural and the architectural parts, in general effect and in detail, are highly classical. Canova may indeed be reckoned

among the ancients. I hardly know whether he belongs more to Athens or to Corinth, but of this I feel assured, that if in the best times of Grecian art a subject of this nature had been to be treated, it would have been by such a work as this. During the twenty-six years which I have lived in this city of the world, I have never before seen such universal admiration excited by any work of art as this. The most intelligent and liberal artists pronounce it to be the nearest approach to the ancients of all the productions of modern sculpture. Even the Jesuits can praise and admire this marble Ganganelli, which certainly may be deemed a miracle of that Pope, who will derive as much glory from this monument as from the suppression of that order. If any thing were needed to convince us that this is a perfect work, it would be furnished by the censures of Michael-Angelists, Berninists, and Borominists, who point out as defects those parts which are its greatest beauties, charging the drapery, the outlines, and expression, with being Grecian ; — "*Dio abbia pietà di loro.*"

Of the funeral monuments executed by Canova, the most remarkable are the one now mentioned in honor of Pope Ganganelli, that of Pope Clement the Thirteenth (Rezzonico), in the church of St Peter's at Rome, which was finished in the year 1792, and that of the Archduchess Christina of Austria, which was erected in 1805 by desire of her husband the duke of Saxe Teschen, in the church of the Augustine Friars at Vienna. These three compositions are all of the first order of merit, and quite unrivalled by anything of the kind in Europe. The last is generally regarded as the finest of the three, perhaps because the artist has given greater latitude in this than in the others to the tender and amiable feelings that formed the basis of his own moral constitution, and determined the leading characteristics of his style in sculpture, which are, in general, grace and sweetness rather than power. The description of this monument by the Countess Albrizzi is particularly full and interesting. It

will be read, we think, with pleasure, although it loses of course a part of its effect when not accompanied by the engravings.

'This mausoleum, placed in the church of the Augustines at Vienna, is in memory of Christina of Austria, daughter of Maria Theresa, and wife of Duke Albert of Saxe Teschen. This beautiful and pathetic composition was executed by Canova at the desire of her afflicted husband, whose grief must be soothed and alleviated by the contemplation of the celestial figures which here so finely express the virtues of her whose memory he so fondly cherishes.

'The monument, the material of which is a greyish marble, presents one side of a pyramid to the spectator, being only slightly raised from the wall against which it rests. It is placed upon an ample base, from which two steps are raised and form the approach to the door of the tomb, over which, on the architrave, the following inscription is engraven; CHRISTINÆ. AUSTRIACÆ. ALBERTI. SAXONICÆ. PRINCIPIS. CONJUGI.

'There are nine figures employed in this monument, besides the lion and the medallion. They are all of the natural size, and may be divided into four groups. The first, which occupies the middle part, consists of an allegorical figure of Virtue, with two young females bearing torches. Virtue is represented in the form of a young matron of a dignified but afflicted aspect, bearing before her the funeral urn, on which, bending down, she rests her forehead. She is attired in a rich tunic and a mantle, gracefully and appropriately disposed; her hair is unbound and spread in a disorderly manner over her shoulders, and her head is encircled with an olive crown. Ascending the steps, which are spread with a rich carpet, she approaches the door of the tomb. The attendant, who goes before her, has already reached the entrance, where her steps seem for a moment arrested by the awful feelings which the place inspires; but bending forward and lowering her torch to illumine the dark abode, she prepares to enter. The pious attitude of this young female, her loosened tresses falling down in rich curls upon her shoulders, her simple attire and modest step, give to her figure a grace and expression which, unaided by the effect of countenance, I have never seen equalled.

The other attendant, who is behind, and is seen in profile, has the same simplicity of dress and character. With downcast eyes and slow and devoted step she follows her celestial conductor. Two wreaths of flowers, joined at the top of the urn, connect these figures, which, from the depth and harmony of the sentiment that unites them, would separately form a complete and charming composition.

‘They are followed, at a short distance, by the second group, observing in some degree the order of a procession. It consists of a female figure, whom from the gentleness of her aspect, we recognize to be Beneficence ; a blind and aged man whom she is leading ; and a young female child. Beneficence is attired with all the simplicity and grace of the Grecian manner. Her hands are sorrowfully crossed before her, and her eyes fixed on the ground with an air of gentleness and affliction. So perfect is the character and expression of this eloquent figure, that she awakens within us all the heightened feeling that the most pathetic poetry could convey. She has ascended the first step, and is followed by the old man, who, leaning on her arm, tries, with the aid of his staff, to raise himself on the step. His appearance bespeaks the feebleness of age and poverty ; and his countenance, on which acute sorrow is depicted, is turned towards the tomb, which probably contains his best friend and benefactress. The child who stands beside him, and is represented with a simplicity conformable to her tender age, is in the humble attitude of prayer. In this group the artist makes a lively allusion to the warmth and readiness of benevolence for which the Princess was so much distinguished. A wreath of flowers, lying on the ground, occupied the short space between the first and second groups ; and if our feelings are excited by these deeply impassioned figures, the fine diagonal line in which they cross the steps of the monument is no less pleasing to the eye.

‘Opposite to these figures, on the left, is a magnificent lion, lying crouching on the upper step, who seems the faithful and eternal guardian of the monument. Seated beside him on the steps, is a winged genius, whose form and aspect discover his celestial origin. A mantle, spread beneath him, protects his

delicate limbs, while, bending forward and leaning with his right arm and side against the lion, he steadfastly and mournfully looks on the funeral procession. His left hand rests upon the shield of the house of Saxony, of which he is the tutelary genius.

'The fourth group, which occupies the upper part of the pyramid, is of a more exalted character. The figure of Felicity is there represented, bearing upward the image of the Princess, encircled by the emblem of eternity. The ærial grace and lightness of her motion, her serene and heavenly countenance, her delicate limbs, are all of the most perfect taste and execution. On the other side, a little winged genius flies towards her bearing a branch of palm.

'Favored by heaven in an illustrious birth and splendid destiny, this Princess is no less felicitous in possessing such a tomb, where the memory of her virtues, which are symbolized by the most perfect creations of genius, is perpetuated, and which will continue to be an object of interest and admiration so long as virtue and genius shall be regarded on earth.'

We have never had the pleasure of seeing this monument, but the effect of it, even in the imperfect shape of an engraved outline, is very great. In the work before us there are five engravings of it, one representing the entire work, and the others respectively the four groups of figures which are specified in the above description. The fourth group, which is placed near the apex of the pyramid, and is composed of a female figure of Felicity, suspended in the air without any visible support, bearing a medallion with the head of the Arch-duchess, attended by a little winged genius with a palm branch, is to us less agreeable than the others, and might we think, have been omitted without injuring the effect of the monument. It was probably thought necessary to introduce somewhere the face of the Princess. In general the effect of winged human figures, which if they be well managed, is often agreeable in poetry and even in paint-

ing, is positively unpleasant in sculpture. The essential incongruity of the combination is here so apparent, that the imagination cannot lose sight of it; and the main impression suggested is that of a person painfully hovering in the air, without sufficient support and in imminent danger of a fall. A still stronger impression of the same kind is of course produced by the view of a figure suspended in the air, without wings or any visible support whatever. Of the other groups, which are all beautiful in different ways, the central one is the most attractive. The art with which the sculptor has communicated a mournful expression to the leading figure which is just entering the monument, and of which the back part only is visible, is truly remarkable. The view of these charming groups recalls to mind the exquisite allegorical figures which the delicate genius of Collins has collected round the 'hallowed mound' of the brave who fell in the battle of Fontenoy, the 'gray pilgrim Honor,' 'Spring, with dewy fingers cold,' and the 'weeping hermit Freedom;' and again in the dirge on Colonel Ross;

'The thoughts which musing Pity pays,  
And fond Remembrance loves to raise,  
Your faithful hours attend;  
Still Fancy, to herself unkind,  
Awakes to grief the softened mind,  
And points the bleeding friend.'

'O'er him, whose doom thy virtues grieve  
Aërial forms shall sit at eve,  
And bend the pensive head;  
And, fallen to save his injured land,  
Imperial Honor's awful hand  
Shall point his lowly bed.'

Of the numerous sepulchral monuments of smaller dimensions, and somewhat less celebrity, which Canova executed, that of the poet Alfieri, in the church of *Santa*

*Croce*, or the Holy Cross, at Florence, is the one most worthy of note, as well for the interesting character of the subject, as from the perfection of the work. Canova, like other artists of transcendent genius, was often compelled, probably with some regret, to lavish the treasures of his talent upon noble mediocrity and royal nothingness; but we may readily conceive, on the other hand, with what inspiration and enthusiasm he must have labored to perpetuate the glory of his illustrious contemporary, who had effected in the poetry of their common country nearly the same revolution which he had himself brought about in the sculpture of modern Europe. Alfieri and Canova were the two great names in art of their day; and the monument, which thus commemorates them in connexion, will be viewed with the deepest interest, independently of its merit as a work, by all future ages.

'The plan,' says Madame Albrizzi, 'is lofty and simple, like the spirit of him whom it records. It consists of a simple sarcophagus, the four corners of which are each ornamented with a tragic mask, symbols of the dramatic genius of Alfieri; and in the centre is sculptured his bust in a medallion, full of life and of that fire which ever glowed in his impetuous breast. On the medallion is inscribed VICT. ALFIERIUS. AST.

'Standing beside the tomb, and resting upon it her right arm, is a colossal female figure with a turreted crown. With one hand she holds the border of her mantle to her streaming eyes, while the other falls negligently at her side. In her majestic countenance, although clouded with grief, we observe that fine symmetry of features in which beauty consists, and which the rules of art require to be ever preserved. She is attired in a tunic, confined under the breast by a narrow band, over which is a regal mantle, which, flowing down from her shoulders, forms an ample train, whose large and graceful folds give a wonderful dignity to her person. It is *Italy* weeping over her son, and with such tears as would be grateful even to the lofty

spirit of Alfieri himself. On the base of the monument is sculptured a lyre, and underneath it the following inscription,—  
VICT. ALFIERIO. ASTENSI. ALOYSIA. E. STOLBERGIS. ALBANYÆ.  
COMITISSA.

‘Among the many noble tombs which adorn this church, that of Alfieri is distinguished by its grandeur, and particularly attracts the attention and admiration of the stranger. It is on this also, that on departing he casts his last glance, as if desirous of treasuring up in his memory so noble an object. May this temple, so sublime a monument of Italian glory, be ever preserved from the sacrilegious hand of violence, and may the ashes of Alfieri here find the repose which his impetuous and inflexible spirit ever disturbed when living.’

The sepulchral monuments executed by Canova would have been sufficient of themselves to have procured him the glory of the restorer of modern sculpture; but with all their merit, they are perhaps not the highest, and certainly not the most pleasing effort of his genius. The triumph of the plastic art, as of painting, lies in the representation of the human figure; and it is obvious that the artist will have more room and better opportunity for developing his talent for this purpose, in proportion as his attention is less diverted from the main object by accessories of inferior importance. In sepulchral monuments there is generally a large mixture of architectural accessories, which a good deal injure the effect of the sculpture; while in groups, statues, and busts, the human figures, which are the proper objects of attention, are also the only ones. Works of this kind, therefore, are far more favorable for the exhibition of the sculptor's skill; and of the various classes of subjects to which they may be devoted, those again are the most happy which afford the greatest latitude for the display of the naked figure. The execution of draperies, though it occasionally affords opportunity for showing a good deal of science, is after all an inferior branch of art. It is often abandoned by the



best portrait painters to their pupils; and in statues, the parts that are covered are in reality, as it regards effect, almost wholly lost. We find accordingly, that the antique groups and statues, which are the most celebrated, and are in fact considered as indicating the perfection of the art, have little or no drapery; and that of those among them in which draperies are employed, the naked parts alone attract much attention. As statues and groups afford by far the best field for the exercise of talent, so it is in them that the genius of Canova displayed itself to the greatest advantage and under its peculiar characteristics. The number of his productions of this class is so astonishingly great, that we shall not undertake even to recapitulate, much less to comment upon them; but shall content ourselves with making a few remarks upon three or four of those which exhibit most distinctly the nature and extent of his talent.

One of the very best, and at the same time most decidedly original statues, is the *Penitent Magdalen*. It was executed by Canova in 1796, and intended as a present to his native city; but afterwards passed into the hands of the French, and now forms a part of the collection of Count Sommariva at Paris, where it has a small room entirely to itself, like the *Venus de' Medici* in the gallery of Florence, and the exquisite *Ariadne* of Danneker in that of the banker Bethman at Frankfort. The *Magdalen* is placed in the centre of this apartment upon a pedestal about three feet high. The figure is of the natural size, and is seated on a rock in the oriental fashion with the feet turned back, and the body resting on them. The arms are extended over the upper part of the thighs, with the palms of the hands upwards and supporting a small cross, upon which the eyes are intently fixed. The head is bent slightly forward; and the features, which are eminently beautiful, are marked with a strong and

deep expression of sorrow. The dishevelled hair falls loosely over the back and shoulders. A slight drapery veils a part of the front of the figure; a cord passes round the waist, while a skull is placed on one side upon the rock. Three engravings are given in the work before us of this fine statue, which we have had opportunity to examine ourselves. Although the subject is not of that class in which the genius of Canova has been thought to take most delight, the execution of the work is perhaps equal in perfection to that of any of the others; nor is there any appearance in it of the affectation, with which some of them have been at times reproached. The attitude, though rather unusual, at least in our latitudes, is perfectly easy, and the form and features true to the style of beauty which belongs to the character. Settled grief dwells in every line of the countenance, and diffuses itself over every part of the figure, so that we plainly discover the expression of it even on a side view and when the face is not visible. Nothing indeed can be finer in its way than one of these side views. It presents the flowing outline of a beautiful female form with proportions rather full than slender, but nicely symmetrical. The upturned sole of the delicate foot, the recumbent thigh swelling under the resistance of the legs and feet on which it reposes, the gracefully reclining body, the smooth and gently rounded shoulders, and the finely turned arms and hands, are all finished and disposed with exquisite taste and skill. At the view of so many beauties, voluptuous emotions begin to steal upon the mind; but the cord that surrounds the waist of the lovely sufferer, the mysterious symbol of torture and penitence that is seen in her hands, the drooping head, the dishevelled hair, the general attitude of utter desolation and abandonment, chasten every idle thought, and inspire, even without the aid of the countenance, the

deepest sentiments of melancholy and pity. On a front view, when the form appears to less advantage, the attention is generally engaged with the features. These, as we remarked above, are in the finest style of Grecian beauty, but impressed with the stamp of settled grief. No ray of light enlivens the gloom of this beclouded mind. The cross itself, upon which the unhappy victim of passion fixes her gaze, is still a sign of terror rather than of consolation; and the expression would be that of absolute despair, were there not around the lips a sweetness indicating patient resignation, which holds out a gleam of hope, that her sincere repentance will in time be accepted, and that heavenly grace will descend in whispers of peace to quiet the alarms of her troubled conscience.

In another statue on the same subject, executed for the Earl of Liverpool in the year 1822, the fair penitent is stretched at her length upon a rock, with a cross by her side, in an attitude which recalls to mind that of *Eloisa*, in Pope's *Epistle*, — a poetical *Magdalen*, more touching, perhaps, than any one that painting or sculpture has ever produced.

' See in her cell sad *Eloisa* spread,  
 Propt on some tomb, a neighbor of the dead.  
 In each low wind methinks a spirit calls,  
 And more than echoes talk along the walls.  
 Here as I watched the dying lamps around,  
 From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound.  
 "Come, sister! come," it said, or seemed to say,  
 "Thy place is here, sad sister! come away.  
 Once like thyself, I trembled, wept, and prayed,  
 Love's victim then, though now a sainted maid  
 But all is calm in this eternal sleep;  
 Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep,  
 E'en superstition loses every fear;  
 For God, not man, absolves our frailties here."

Although the poet in this exquisite Epistle, and the sculptor in the two Magdalens to which we have alluded have chosen to personify Repentance, under the form of a beautiful female reduced to hopeless misery by the indulgence of licentious passions, there would perhaps be more truth to nature and better means of producing effect, at least in poetry, by assuming for this purpose the internal agony of successful and triumphant guilt. When our deviations from the path of rectitude fail in producing for us the pleasures and advantages we had expected, such is the infirmity of the human heart, that we naturally bewail our ill success rather than our errors. 'He repented of his faults,' says Goethe, in describing the last moments of some wretched vagabond, 'He repented of his faults much, but of his misfortunes much more.'

'Er bereute seine Fehler sehr,  
Ja ; und bejammerte sein Unglück noch viel mehr.'

In these cases imagination brings before us the objects which we have failed to attain under new attractions ; and instead of really repenting of our vicious desires, we rather regret that we were not permitted to realize them, and thus to become even more guilty than we have been. The poet, by presenting different trains of thought as passing successively through the mind of his subject, has the means of exhibiting correctly this conflict of opposite and various feelings ; and the truth, energy, and beauty with which it is described, form in fact the great merit of Pope's *Eloisa*. But the painter and sculptor, who can only represent a single moment of time with its predominant emotion, are compelled to set before us images of Repentance, which, however touching, are to a certain extent untrue to nature. Cromwell in his palace, and not Bonaparte upon his rock, would be the true type of the torments of guilty ambition. When the flush of tri-

umph is over, and experience has proved the nothingness,—considered as elements of happiness in themselves, and independently of the means by which they are acquired and the manner in which they are used,—of the power, the wealth, the fame, the pleasure, in pursuit of which he has defied the suggestions of his own conscience, and trampled on the happiness of all around him, it is then, and then only, that the slave of Vice looks back with unavailing regret upon the peace of mind which he has lost for ever. It is then that Virtue appears to him in all her natural charms, heightened, if possible, by the coloring of Fancy; and that he begins, like the evil spirit in *Paradise Lost*, to ‘pine his loss’; or in the words of the Latin poet, from whom Milton imitated the passage,

‘*Virtutem videat, intabescatque relictâ.*’

This is the moment of real *repentance*, a secret agony that dwells unperceived by the world, in the inmost recesses of the heart, while perhaps the face is radiant with smiles and the body robed in purple. The sculptor, whose art dwells only in sensible images, has really no means of delineating these feelings, and must leave it to the poet in his wider range of observation and description to do them justice.

For these reasons the two admirable statues, which we have just been describing, are perhaps, in strict correctness of language, representations of Grief rather than Repentance; but by the aid of accessories, which direct the imagination of the spectator, they produce the effect intended. While they are among the very best, they are also, as we have already remarked, among the most completely original works of Canova, and would suffice of themselves to refute the invidious suggestions sometimes made by his enemies, that he was a mere imitator of the ancients, and entirely destitute of any creative

genius of his own. Upon the force of this objection taken in general, we shall presently have occasion to make a few remarks. Among the other statues of Canova, the *Perseus* and the two *Venuses*, though perhaps not decidedly the first in effect, are particularly remarkable as being direct imitations of the *Apollo Belvedere*, and the *Venus de' Medici*. A comparison of these beautiful copies with their still more beautiful models is at once an interesting study, and will afford a convenient occasion for a brief inquiry into the merit of Canova in itself, and as compared with that of the greatest antique sculptors.

The *Perseus* was executed in 1800 for an artist at Milan, but the Pope insisted on retaining it at Rome, and placing it in the Vatican Gallery as a substitute for the *Apollo Belvedere*, which was then in the Louvre at Paris. The subject is analogous to that of the *Apollo*, and the general plan of the execution is the same. *Perseus* is represented in the moment of his victory over the Gorgon Medusa, and holds out at arm's length in his left hand the head which he has just cut off, while his right hand grasps a dagger. The weight of the figure reposes on the left leg, and the right one is drawn a little upward, and touches the ground only with the toes. The upper part of the body is slightly thrown back, and the face is turned with a look of scornful triumph upon that of the hideous enemy. The attitude and expression are therefore exactly the same with those of the famous original. There is, however, this important difference in the execution of the two statues, that the antique sculptor has given an unnatural roundness and smoothness to the limbs of the *Apollo*, and has hardly represented the muscles at all, intending, as is commonly supposed, to indicate in this way the supernatural character of his subject. Canova, on the other hand, has brought out fully the entire muscular conformation proper

to the age and constitution of his hero. In this particular the modern sculptor has, we think, shown a better judgment than the ancient one. Our idea of divinity is realized and embodied in human forms (as far as it can be so realized and embodied) by representing these forms as they exist at their highest point of perfection, and not by fantastic variations from the truth of nature. A distinct indication of the true shape of the limbs is as necessary to the beauty of a statue, as a correct representation of the features of the face; and a god without muscles must be ranked, as such, with the other imaginary beings that people the heaven of the pagan mythology, — ‘Gorgons, and hydras, and ohimeras diro.’

Of the two Venuses, one was executed in 1805 for the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but under the express condition that it should not occupy the place of the *Venus de' Medici* in the Florence Gallery; the other is a repetition of the former with some variations, and was executed in 1820 for Mr Thomas Hope. Although the modesty of Canova led him to decline a formal competition with the celebrated antique which has just been mentioned, he has had it in view in both these statues, and in the latter still more directly than in the former. Both are, however, somewhat larger than the model, and depart so much from it in other respects, that they must be regarded as free imitations, or original works on the same subject, rather than mere copies. In the one first executed, the goddess is just issuing from the bath. She bends the upper part of her body slightly forward, and presses to her breast, with both hands, a cloth with which she is supposed to be drying her person, and which hangs down in loose folds, forming a drapery that nearly covers the front of the statue. She turns her head towards her left shoulder as if listening; and the beautiful countenance, as well as the attitude of the body and disposition

of the arms and drapery, exhibits very decidedly the sentiment of alarm, as if she were afraid of being surprised by some unwelcome visitor. The Venus de' Medici has no drapery whatever; and although the attitude and disposition of the arms give to the statue an air of modesty which is one of its principal attractions, yet the countenance indicates complete tranquillity. The sentiment expressed is not the fear of surprise, but rather an instinctive delicacy which shrinks from exposure even in retirement. In the second Venus of Canova the proportions of the figure are rather fuller than in the first, and the disposition of the arms is nearly the same as in the Venus de' Medici. The drapery is considerably reduced, and is secured by the right hand alone, so as to cover only a small part of the front of the figure, while the left arm and hand are drawn up before the breast. The expression of the countenance is that of entire tranquillity. In all these respects the sculptor has shown an evident intention to copy more closely than he did before the celebrated statue, which, as the poet of the Seasons enthusiastically expresses it, 'enchants the world.' The Countess Albrizzi, illustrious herself for beauty as well as wit, and of course a competent judge on the question, enlarges with warmth upon the perfection of both these statues, but declines expressing a preference for either. 'The shape of this Venus,' she observes in reference to the second, 'is more formed than that of the other, and there is more of ease and repose in her posture and features. The minutest difference which so consummate an artist has thought proper to make in two models of female beauty, executed at different periods of his life, is doubtless highly interesting; but I deem it prudent to desist here from a comparison which is dangerous even between mortal beauties, and advise the lover of art to content himself, as I shall do,



with tracing out and admiring the peculiar charms which each of them possesses.' There are two repetitions of the former of these Venuses in its original shape. The first belongs to the king of Bavaria. The second was executed for Lucien Bonaparte, and is now in possession of the Marquis of Lansdowne.

Any one of these statues, or of the repetitions of them, would confer upon its author the fame of a first-rate sculptor, but when tried by the high standard which is properly applied to the works of Canova, they will not perhaps be considered as among his happiest efforts, and not being such, must of course fall below the famous models which are justly regarded as the masterpieces of the art. There are no circumstances indeed, under which talent is exhibited with so little advantage as in direct imitations of the finished productions of others. A diligent study of the best models is no doubt an excellent, or rather indispensable means of forming a correct taste; and to make copies of them is for this purpose a useful exercise. But when it is the object of the artist to display the ripe fruits of his own genius, he should look for models directly and exclusively to nature, and rather avoid than seek such subjects as have already been treated in a masterly way. For in laboring upon them, if he aim at close imitation, the free developement of his genius is checked; and if on the other hand he rather seek to avoid servility, he is apt to run into a false direction for the mere purpose of being original. In either case he loses the direct and unchecked following of nature, which is the only principle of excellence in art. If we compare in detail the Perseus and the Venuses of Canova with their respective models, it is easy to perceive the points in which the latter are inferior. Neither of the Venuses, however exquisitely beautiful they both may be, is equally perfect in shape or features with the Medici; and the tranquil

modesty of the latter is a far more pleasing expression than the startled timidity of the others. The second Venus has nearly the expression of the antique; but here again the fuller proportions are an unfortunate variation, because they contrast with the extreme, and, as it were, ethereal delicacy which seems to be the leading characteristic of the subject. The Persens, which we think sustains this dangerous comparison better than the Vennuses, wants perhaps the exact truth to nature in the attitude and disposition of the limbs, which distinguishes the Apollo Belvedere, and brings out so happily the character of intellectual and moral sublimity, which the artist intended to impart to his work. The attitude of the Perseus has been said by some to be impossible; and if we grant that this statement of the objection is a strong exaggeration, it must yet perhaps be admitted that the figure has not the complete freedom which the expression of nobleness and superiority so peculiarly requires. We may conclude, on the whole, that notwithstanding the extraordinary merits of these imitations by Canova the two antique models retain the preëminence which they have always been allowed to possess over all the other efforts of the art. There is something indeed in the nature of these subjects, compared with the perfection of the execution, which renders it nearly impossible that they can ever be surpassed or even equalled. The manly and the female form, each in its perfect state, and inspired by the moral expression that properly belongs to it, are the natural types of sublimity and beauty. When therefore, the two have been represented with their respective attributes of imposing dignity and modest grace, in a style of execution which seems to realize our idea of perfection, it is evident that the capacity of the art for producing effect is exhausted. The best subjects have been treated in the best manner; and nothing remains

for succeeding artists, but to repent them under all the disadvantages attending imitation, or to do the best they can with inferior subjects, which, however well treated, must necessarily produce inferior effects. A somewhat similar result takes place in the other departments of art after they have been carried, in point of execution, to a high degree of perfection; but it is more remarkable in sculpture than in the rest, because there is no other in which any one or more particular subjects are so distinctly marked out by nature as the best. For these reasons the Apollo Belvedere and the Venus de' Medici will probably be regarded for ever as the *ne plus ultra* of statuary, the 'matchless boast' of the age, the country, and the unknown artists that produced them. We may imagine, though with difficulty, other groups of equal or even superior merit to Laocoon; because in the infinite variety of actions and passions that lie within the compass of possibility, and of the figures which they respectively bring together, there is no one combination that naturally strikes the mind as positively superior to all others. But for single statues which produce the two great effects of the art, sublimity and beauty, in their simplest, and of course purest and most perfect forms, two subjects, corresponding respectively with these two effects, are distinctly indicated by nature as the best; and the boldest imagination is wholly incapable of going beyond them.

But while we think that Canova, in his attempt to copy these miracles of art has fallen below his inimitable originals, we are not prepared to admit that his genius was inferior to that of the sculptors who produced them. We conceive, on the contrary, that he carried the art to as high a pitch of perfection as it ever has been or ever can be brought to. We must estimate the extent of his talent, not by comparing his imitation with their models, but by comparing his best original works with those of

other sculptors. Nor is it of course necessary, in order to vindicate his claim to an equality with the Grecian artists, that he alone should have produced a collection of masterpieces equal in number to the vast multitude of recovered antique works that fill the galleries of Europe. A single production of first-rate merit insures its author the glory of a first-rate artist, which is, however, doubtless more cheerfully and generally accorded when his genius is prolific as well as powerful. Such was the character of that of Canova. His works, in almost all the departments of sculpture, are exceedingly numerous; and the best of them stand, in our opinion, on a line of equality with the finest remains of antiquity. The *Theseus*, the *Penitent Magdalen*, the *Hebe*, and twenty others that might be cited, are in no way inferior to the *Fighting* and *Dying Gladiators*, the *Listening Slave*, the *Antinous*, and the numerous other antiques that belong, by general acknowledgment, to the first class. If none of them equal the *Apollo* and *Venus*, it is, as we have remarked above, because the latter are placed by the nature of their subjects beyond the possibility of rivalry. The Greeks are entitled, no doubt, to the peculiar honor of having first carried the art to perfection; but this was effected by a gradual process, and the glory of doing it belongs to the artists as a body, or rather to the ever memorable nation which produced them, and appertains in a very limited extent to any individual. It is indeed a most extraordinary thing, that among the vast varieties of communities, under so many different conditions of society, which cover the face of the globe, one only should have discovered and applied to practice the true principles of taste in the arts. And yet, strange as it is, it is nevertheless certain, that in Greece only,—a little cluster of communities, hardly more populous at the time of their highest prosperity than the New England states

are now, and occupying a territory not more highly favored, as respects geographical extent and character, than ours, — in Greece only, we say, and in those countries of modern times which have been inspired by her example, do we find any approach to perfection, or any appearance of correct taste in the arts, although they have all been attempted by almost all other nations, and by many far superior to Greece in the principal circumstances which would seem likely to facilitate success, such as wealth, population, and especially stability of political institutions. To what particular causes the Greeks owed this remarkable peculiarity in their national character, whether to some natural advantages of climate (in which they yet seem to have possessed no decided preëminence), or, as is more probable, to their popular forms of government, which brought into action the sincere and unsophisticated opinions and feelings of the body of the community as the test of excellence of every description, is a question that we need not and cannot here discuss. The fact, however, is undoubted. The honor of it, as we remarked above, belongs in the main to the Greeks as a nation, and not to particular individuals, although we may justly allow a very singular degree of merit to those artists who, in each department, give as it were the finishing stroke to the work, however nearly it may have been brought to perfection by their immediate predecessors. The *Ægina* marbles, for example, now preserved in the museum of the king of Bavaria, are a single step only behind those of Athens. They exhibit the true principles of taste, and want nothing but the perfect freedom and grace in the application of those principles, which belong to the later school of Phidias. Yet the final effort by which this celebrated sculptor brought the art to perfection, though not perhaps more difficult than some of those by which it had been

advanced to the state he found it in, has consecrated his name to perpetual remembrance, while those of all his predecessors are lost. To a glory like this, Canova can of course have no pretension. His genius, like that of all modern sculptors, like those of the artists of the period to which belong nearly all the antique works that have come down to us, like those of the authors of the *Apollo Belvedere* and the *Venus de' Medici*, was inspired by the contemplation of the masterpieces of a former age. Next, however, in order to the merit of original invention, is that of reviving the true principles of an art or science after they have long been lost; and this we think, Canova has a right to claim. He must be looked upon as the real restorer of sculpture in modern times. Michael Angelo is doubtless an illustrious name; but in all the arts which he exercised, though his genius was bold, creative, and imposing, his taste was imperfect; and he exhibits the extravagance which was one of the symptoms of a still progressive and immature style. In painting he was excelled in his own time, by Rafael; and after the lapse of nearly three centuries, Canova has finally raised the sister art, from the point where Michael Angelo left it, to the antique standard of perfection, and has thus proved himself the Rafael of sculpture and the Phidias of modern days. If the name of Phidias be justly regarded, and must always remain, the first and greatest in sculpture, that of Canova will rank forever as the second, at least until the art shall again be lost, and some other happy genius, whose merit would of course be the same with his, shall again restore it to all its present lustre. In building, the taste of Michael Angelo, though not less objectionable than in painting and sculpture, has not yet been much improved upon by his successors. The architectural Phidias of modern days is yet to come; and the probable place of his appearance,

if we may venture to say it, without awakening the jealousy of rival nations, seems to be indicated with sufficient exactness by the granite quarries and popular institutions of our western continent.

Such by the general acknowledgement of the age is the merit of Canova, and his rank when compared with other sculptors of ancient and modern times. But although the European public has been nearly unanimous in according to his works the tribute of enthusiastic approbation, he has yet found detractors even on the Continent; and some of the leading British journalists, though evidently in a great measure uninformed respecting his productions and character, have exhibited, as we remarked above, their usual national partiality by attempting to depress his reputation below that of their own countrymen. This is the more remarkable, because the real judges of the art in England have given the strongest evidence of the value they set on his works, in the eagerness they have shown to possess them. Some of the finest of them have been executed for or purchased by the principal personages in Great Britain, such as the Dukes of Wellington, Bedford, and Devonshire, Lord Liverpool, the Marquis of Landsdowne, Mr Hope, Lord Brownlow, and the King himself. It has, however, been objected to this great artist, that he has employed his genius too much upon subjects taken from the Greek mythology. The proper business of the artist, it is said, is to imitate nature as he sees it around him. If he go back for subjects to Grecian history and fable, he will probably give us nothing more than repetitions of the works of the Grecian sculptors, since the direct study of nature is the only path to originality in art. It is farther objected that in some of his statues there is an air of affectation, and a profusion of unmeaning accessories in the way of ornament, which make them look like groups

of opera dances, rather than images taken from real life.

The first of these objections, which is stated in detail, and with an air of much triumph, in the London Quarterly Review, seems to be founded in the mere spirit of wanton hypercriticism, which does not even take the pains to be consistent and plausible in error. It is admitted by all, that direct imitation of particular forms, that is, the taking of portraits, whether in painting or sculpture, is an inferior branch of art. But in treating historical subjects, the great merit of an artist does not lie in preserving with strict fidelity the figure and costume of his characters, but in powerful delineations of the passions belonging to the situation in which they are placed. In order to do this with success, he must study nature in the depths of his own mind and in the varying action of the world around him; but in displaying the results of this study, it is wholly unimportant whether he lay his scene in his own time, or in any former one, or in the fabulous epochs and regions of mythology. Shakspeare drew his materials for the character of Macbeth from his observations on the workings of ambition in himself and his contemporaries; but the image is not the less true and striking, because the character is drest in a Scotch bonnet and plaid instead of the British costume of the age of Elizabeth. When a sculptor has produced a perfect image of the airy form, elastic step, and thoughtless gayety that belong to the spring of life, of what consequence is it whether he call his work *Youth* or *Hebe*, that is, whether he give it its proper name in Greek or in English? The Adam and Eve of Milton's *Paradise Lost* represent precisely the same subjects with the Apollo Belvedere and the Venus de' Medici, and with equal success according to the different capacities of the arts of poetry and sculpture; but is the effect, in either case, less striking because the nature so admirably delin-



cated is not baptized with a modern European name? Would the 'fair large front and eye sublime' of Adam appear to greater advantage if his body were habited in a coat, waistcoat, and breeches? Are the hyacinthine locks that

'Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad,'

less graceful than the flowing wig of the age of Louis the Fourteenth, or the convenient crop of the present? Every impartial reader will reply without hesitation in the negative. But while it is thus a matter of indifference where the artist lays the scene of his work, provided it be true to nature, there may be, on the other hand, particular classes of subjects which, for accidental reasons, are particularly favorable to the exercise of each of the arts. And without going into general considerations, which would carry us too far, we may remark, that sculpture delights especially in such subjects as allow the representation of flowing draperies and of the naked human figure. Draperies of all kinds occasion, as we have already suggested, an expense of labor for a comparatively trifling effect; and the stiff costumes of the modern world, however well they may be managed in painting (and even there they are in general sufficiently ungraceful), are intolerable in marble. The historical and mythological personages of antiquity are therefore really superior to all other subjects for the purposes of sculpture; not because there is a magic virtue in the name of Greece or of antiquity, but for the simple reason, that a swanlike neck and a finely turned arm are more agreeable objects to contemplate than a starched ruff and a sleeve *à la gigot*. In frequently working upon this class of subjects, Canova has, therefore, exhibited good sense and a correct understanding of the means of

producing effect; while the perfection with which he has treated various other subjects of a different kind, demonstrates that he is in no way indebted for success to a servile imitation of the antique.

The other objection, that in some of his works there is a childish expression and a profusion of useless accessories, has perhaps some slight foundation in truth, but does not affect his general reputation, because it applies only to a few hasty efforts of little or no consequence. In stating that the groups of Canova appear like opera dancers rather than images of real life, the critic had probably in view two or three models for works in relieve, particularly those of *Venus dancing with the Graces*, and of *Helen carried off by Theseus*. In these productions certain garlands, similar to those which are often employed in the ballets of the French opera, are in fact introduced, and probably furnished the hint for this flattering and candid criticism. But without inquiring here, whether a garland of flowers, one of the most beautiful and poetical objects of nature, be or be not absolutely inadmissible in sculpture because it is occasionally used at the opera, we may add, that the aforesaid models were so little valued by Canova, that he did not even execute them in marble. They have been preserved in the collections of engravings by the effect of that religious reverence that attaches importance to every trifle connected with the objects of its just veneration. Among the finished works of Canova, whether of greater or less importance, only one, namely, the Group of the Graces, exhibits this obnoxious feature; but without disparagement to the better judgment of others, we must confess, that the garlands, with which these beautiful forms are entwined, appear to us to have been the happiest accessories which the sculptor could have employed to sustain his three figures, and at the same time leave

them, as the subject required, almost wholly without drapery. Madame Albrizzi, who criticises under the influence of a different, but much more correct feeling, than the London Reviewers, calls it a 'happy thought to sustain the figures of the Graces with flowers.' This charming work was executed by Canova for the Empress Josephine. It bears the same relation to the antique group on the same subject, which the Perseus and Venuses bear to the Apollo Belvedere and the Venus de' Medici; and like them it falls, we think, rather short of the model. The symmetry and finish of the figure are perhaps equally perfect, but the attitudes and expression are somewhat less fortunate. Instead of the easy position, and open, tranquil countenances of the antique group, we have in that of Canova an artificial twining of the arms, and an almost childish sweetness, bordering too nearly upon unpleasant insipidity, in the faces. The antique artist had chosen the correct posture and expression, the same which Canova would probably have employed, had he wrought with entire independence. But the latter having been requested to execute a work upon the same subject with the ancient *chef-d'œuvre*, and being willing to avoid the appearance of servile imitation, adopted variations in the mode of treating it, which were necessarily alterations for the worse. This group is the only one of the numerous productions of Canova, in which we have noticed any appearance of the affected sweetness of countenance, which has been represented by unfriendly critics as one of the faults in his general manner. Although, as we have already shown in detail, he has often treated the stronger passions with much success, Grace and Tenderness, as they corresponded with the prominent features in his own moral character, breathe of course through the marble upon which he had impressed it. But the expression of these amiable quali-

ties is always governed by a perfect taste, and never deviates into affectation, at least in no other instance than that which we have now remarked. We may add here, that while Canova has, in all his statues, employed as little drapery as possible, and although his style be soft and graceful, in some cases almost to voluptuousness, he has never overstepped the limits prescribed by the strictest delicacy, but on the contrary has sedulously studied more than almost any other sculptor, all the reserve which real modesty requires. So remarkable is this peculiarity in his manner, that even female critics of the purest taste have reprehended him for excessive fastidiousness. 'A light drapery,' says the Countess Albrizzi in her remarks on the *Psyche*, 'a light drapery, of brilliant whiteness and of the finest texture, which forms an admirable contrast with the almost natural tints of the flesh, and does honor even to the chisel of Canova, is folded with graceful simplicity around her. But why, O *Psyche*! conceal beneath that envious vest thy lovely limbs, when, veiled only in thy ingenuousness and artless innocence, the thoughts of those who fix their admiring eyes upon thee become pure and guiltless as thyself?'

It would be impossible for us, within the limits to which we are obliged to confine ourselves, to comment upon all even of the remarkable productions of this prolific genius. Having noticed, in some detail, two or three of the principal sepulchral monuments and single statues, we shall mention somewhat more concisely a few of the groups, busts, and portraits.

Of the groups, the finest are that of the *Three Graces*, to which we have just alluded, the two on the subject of *Cupid and Psyche*, the *Venus and Adonis*, and the *Mars and Venus*. The two last are in our opinion the most perfect of the whole. The subject of them is substantially the same under different names, and is obviously

the best that can be chosen for a group of two figures, manly strength and dignity brought into contrast with female softness, grace, and beauty. It is not treated in any of the antique groups that have been preserved, so that Canova has, in this instance, exercised his talent with perfect freedom; and his complete success proves, that when he has wrought upon the same subjects with the ancients, he has been, as might have been expected, embarrassed rather than assisted by his models. In bringing together in a group the natural types of sublimity and beauty, it is impossible that either effect can be produced in its highest degree, because the sentiment that unites the two figures softens in part the peculiar attributes of both. A group of this kind would therefore never present a combination of two forms as perfect as those of the Apollo Belvedere and the Venus de' Medici. The 'settled majesty of proud disdain' naturally melts into a milder expression in the neighborhood of beauty; whose ideal image must be supposed in turn, like the maid of France, in Milman's poem, to gaze upon the noble form of the 'heavenly archer' with 'more than reverence.' But though something be lost in the perfection of both figures by bringing them together, there is a new source of pleasure in the contrast of their respective beauties. Canova has, we think, done full justice to this subject, especially in the Venus and Adonis, and given it all the effect which it could possibly be made to produce. Adonis stands erect, with a hunting spear in his right hand, as if preparing for the chase. His left arm encircles the waist of the goddess, who stands at his side, with one hand resting on his left shoulder, and the other gently touching his cheek with the ends of the fingers. Her countenance expresses tenderness mingled with regret, while the young sportsman is all unconcern and indifference. His companions expect him, and his

thoughts are already far away upon the distant mountain-tops and in the sylvan haunts of the savage boar. It is evidently to no purpose, that Venus is using every effort to detain him. At the view of this somewhat disparaging representation of the power of beauty, our fair critic relaxes a little from her habitual tone of unmingled panegyric, and gently reprehends the sculptor, in the name of the sex, for his want of gallantry. 'This delightful group,' says she, 'must command the admiration of every one, but will be least pleasant to our sex, who cannot endure, even in marble, that the sentiment which they inspire should be weaker than that which they themselves experience. If this subject had been treated by a female artist, undoubtedly Adonis would have been the suppliant. It is generally felt, that the figure of Venus, notwithstanding the seducing softness of her limbs, and the loveliness of the features, heightened as it is by the expression of gentleness and affection, is not so strikingly beautiful as that of her lover. Is this because she is in the attitude of solicitation? Gentle dames! what a lesson is this for us, and what can we expect when it is necessary to sue, if Venus herself in so doing loses her attraction.'

This group was executed in 1795 for an Italian nobleman, and is now the property of Mr Favre of Geneva. The *Mars and Venus* was executed in 1816, for the king of Great Britain. The two on the subject of Cupid and Psycho belonged to the ex-king of Naples, Murat, and were both at one time placed in the royal palace of Compiègne near Paris. One of them is now in possession of the emperor of Russia. They are both charming compositions, but inferior we think, to the antique group. We have not room, however, to comment upon them in detail. Among the busts on ideal subjects may be mentioned those of the *Laura* of Petrarch and the *Beatrice* of

Dante; with that of *Helen*, which was presented by Canova to his fair commentator, as a token of his satisfaction with her descriptions of his works, the first editions of which were published during the sculptor's life. In the subsequent ones, she expresses in turn her gratitude for the present. 'That enchanting Helen was to Paris the precious token of the gratitude of Venus, and now her image presents itself to my eyes endeared by the same noble sentiment. But this highly valued gift serves only to manifest the friendship and generous feelings of Canova towards me; for as to these imperfect descriptions of the delightful productions of his chisel, his indulgence alone in respect to them has made me proud and grateful.'

The chisel of Canova was comparatively seldom exercised in portraits (if this term may be used in reference to statuary), but of the few which he executed, two are particularly remarkable from the extraordinary interest of the subjects. We allude to those of *Napoleon* and *Washington*. The former is of a size larger than nature, and was executed in 1803 for Napoleon himself. There is also a bronze cast of the model in the palace of the arts at Milan. The *Washington* as our readers are aware, was executed for the state of North Carolina, and was sent home, we believe, in the year 1821. The *Napoleon* is entirely without drapery, excepting a loose military cloak which hangs from the left arm, without covering any part of the figure. The *Washington* is clothed in the habit of an ancient Roman warrior. In both cases Canova has, we think, exhibited a less correct judgment in regard to costume, than we should naturally have expected from his consummate taste. However superior naked figures and flowing draperies may be for the purposes of art, to the formal and fantastic dresses of the modern world, we hold it to be quite clear, that portraits,

whether in painting or sculpture, must be clothed in the costume which the persons represented habitually wore. The object here is not to produce the highest possible effect, but the highest effect consistent with the imitation of a given model. For this reason the taking of portraits is doubtless an inferior branch of art; but it has nevertheless, its own rules that cannot be violated without sacrificing the value of the work, which, in that case, may be a fine statue or painting, but will not be a fine portrait, and, having been intended for a portrait, will probably, after all, not be an ideal work of the first order. In the statue of Napoleon we hardly recognize, even after we know it to have been intended for him, the well known form and features, and are disappointed, instead of being gratified, by the ideal perfection of the figure. The nearest possible approach to the person of Bonaparte, as it was at the period of his first campaign in Italy, with a modern military costume, would have produced, as a portrait, an infinitely greater effect. Napoleon himself does not seem to have been satisfied with the work, which though placed in the gallery of the Louvre, was concealed from public view by a curtain. The *Biography of Living Characters* affirms with a ludicrous excess of political party feeling (in a passage quoted in our former article on this subject), that the statue exhibited at once so perfect a resemblance to the model, and so ignoble a form and countenance, that the emperor was ashamed to have it seen. Every spectator, not absolutely blinded by prejudice, sees at a single glance, that it is a grand heroic figure infinitely nobler than that of the subject, but of little or no value as a portrait, precisely from the want of resemblance. After the abdication of Napoleon, it was presented by the allies to the Duke of Wellington, and now remains in his possession, a most appropriate and splendid trophy of his victory over the be-



fore unconquered original. The costume of the Washington is less injudicious than the *no-costume* of the Napoleon, but is not, in our opinion, conceived on correct principles of taste. The sitting attitude, employed by Canova, is also, less advantageous than the upright one would have been. It is only in fact in a standing position, that the human figure displays its full natural dignity ;

‘ Os homini sublime dedit cœlumque tueri  
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.’

Now as dignity, moral and physical, was the peculiar characteristic of Washington, the attitude best fitted to express this quality seemed to be almost commanded by the subject. We were therefore a good deal surprised to find, upon conversing with Chantrey on the plan of his statue on the same subject, before he had begun the model, that he was wavering between a standing and sitting position ; and we have seen with much satisfaction, that he finally decided in favor of the former. In this particular and in that of the costume, his work is a happier one than that of his illustrious Italian contemporary ; and as his talent in this branch of the art is probably equal, the citizens of Boston may boast of possessing a decidedly finer statue of Washington, than that of Canova, though by a generally inferior sculptor.

Our limits will not permit us to enlarge any further upon the particular merits of the different works of Canova, which amount in number to several hundreds, or even to specify their subjects. Our object has been to indicate the general character of his style of sculpture, and to illustrate our views respecting it by observations on a few of his productions. Nor have we room to dwell at length upon the events of his life, — his embassy to Paris in 1811, for the purpose of reclaiming the works of art which had been carried away from Italy by the

French, or the numerous titles, crosses, and pensions, that were conferred upon him by the admiration and gratitude of the various sovereigns of Europe. 'No artist,' says his biographer, 'was ever more exposed to the intoxicating effects of honors and distinctions, exceeding perhaps any instance of the kind in the history of the arts. But although decorated with the equestrian orders of many great sovereigns, decreed noble in several states, dignified by titles, enriched by pensions, honored by important charges and functions, received with distinction at all courts, desired in all societies, and associated with all the principal academies of Europe, he still preserved the simplicity and modesty of his character. His disposition was naturally highly benevolent, and all his pensions and gains were devoted to useful and charitable purposes, so that some interference was often required to prevent him from embarrassing his circumstances by a too active generosity.' Various instances of his munificence are related in detail by his biographer, which we have not space to copy. He appears in fact to have been the chief patron of the arts and of those who cultivated them at Rome. Rome herself, during the gloomy period when she was deprived of the presence of her sovereign, and incorporated with the French empire, is said to have found her principal economical resources in the presence of this illustrious and indefatigable artist. What a fall was there, when the Eternal City, the Empress of the world, was brought so low that she could draw consolation and relief from the chisel of a single sculptor! What a contrast too, between these active and amiable private virtues, and the wild extravagance, the gross sensuality, the revolting eccentricities, which so often obscure the light of transcendent genius! What would not have been the happiness and glory of Lord Byron, for example, could he have combined with his

powerful and brilliant poetical talent such a moral character as that of Canova! The contemplation of such a union of various excellences reconciles us with humanity; while the extraordinary success and popularity which formed, in this instance, the reward of real merit, console us in part for the frequent temporary ascendancy of error, violence, and vice.

It only remains to notice, very briefly, the last moments of this interesting and well filled life. Canova had early impaired his health by intense application, before his reputation and success procured him the means of employing assistants in executing the less important parts of his works. When engaged upon the monument of Pope Rezzonico, he was obliged to make constant use for a long time of a machine which required a pressure on the breast, and thus occasioned a disorganization in that part, which injured his health through life, and was probably the cause of the schirrous affection of the stomach, which finally proved mortal. A careful, regular, and simple mode of living prevented, however, any immediate ill effects, and his labors were seldom interrupted by illness until just before his death. The great vital organ which was diseased finally ceased to perform its functions; and the illustrious artist resigned himself to undergo the common lot of humanity with a calmness and serenity corresponding with the beauty and purity of his life. When his brother, who was his constant domestic companion, brought him some of the last soothing remedies, 'T is good,' said he, 'very good, but 't is all to no purpose,' — *Buono, buonissimo, ma è inutile*. 'And yet,' continued the kind-hearted sculptor, 'let me taste it that I may stay with you a little longer.' The last words which he uttered, and which he repeated at several different times, were *Anima bella e pura*, 'pure and gentle spirit,' a reminiscence, perhaps, of the well known ad-

dress of the dying man to his soul by the Emperor Adrian, which is imitated in the *Dying Christian* of Pope. *Animula, vagula, blandula!* As the stern soul of Napoleon appeared in the midst of its mortal agony to be directing the storm of battle at the head of his army,—*tête armée* being the last words he pronounced,—so this milder, though not less lofty spirit, while hovering on the confines of eternity, was still engaged in the sweet and soothing contemplations in which it habitually delighted. We have already mentioned the period of his death at the commencement of this article. The funeral honors which were rendered to his memory in his native city and throughout all Italy, clearly indicated the public estimation of his works and genius.

‘The loss of Canova occasioned the deepest affliction throughout the city of Venice, the power which regulates human destinies having conducted him to the tomb in that country where he had first drawn breath. The patriarch himself would perform the funeral rites; and the academic body, who were desirous of supporting his bier, conducted the coffin of their revered brother and master to the church, and thence to the hall of the academy, followed by so numerous a train, that that vast apartment was insufficient to contain them. The walls of the hall were hung with engraved copies of the works of Canova, so numerous that they appeared the labors of a whole race of artists, rather than of a single mind and hand. The president of the academy, an affectionate friend of the deceased,’ (Count Cicognara himself,) ‘delivered the oration, exciting in the minds of the assembly the same deep emotions by which he was himself affected. The only torch, which burnt beside the bier, stood on that ancient bronze which had for so many centuries, been used to receive the votes of the patricians in the hall of the great council, and was deemed a suitable candelabrum for the last offices paid to the latter glories of the Venetian state.

‘Immediately after the ceremony, the body was removed to

Possagno, where an honorable tomb will be raised to his memory in the new church now nearly completed. The funeral rites were performed on the twenty-fifth of October, and a discourse delivered by a distinguished prelate to so large a concourse of the inhabitants of that district, that it was found necessary to address them under the open sky. Throughout Italy the deepest affliction prevailed on this event. Rome, who lost by his death the restorer of her modern greatness, decreed to him the honor of a statue, proclaimed him perpetual president of her chief academy, and ordered for him a funeral in the church of the Holy Apostles, of such magnificence that all the tributary arts were occupied for many months in the preparation of it. The Pope contributed largely to the expense; and the whole of the magistracy, together with the representatives of the first powers in Europe, showed their respect for it by their presence. Likewise Florence, Trevigi, Udine, and Lodi, gave each her public demonstrations of grief on this occasion; but none with more zealous promptitude than the Venetian artists, the kind friends and fellow academicians of Canova. Immediately on his death, they voted to his memory the grandest and most distinguished monument that could be devised. Not to limit the honor of this design to Venice alone, or even to Italy, the subscription was thrown open to all Europe, to whom his fame might be deemed to belong; whereupon the powers then assembled at Verona, following the example of our august Emperor, severally evinced their desire of promoting this object by munificent donations; as the more distant sovereigns also did on the announcement of the project. So rapid and considerable was the subscription, that long before the ensuing spring they were in a condition to begin the work.

‘A monument to the memory of Titian had been designed by Canova in the year 1792, which it was intended to raise in the church De’ Friari in Venice; but the design, which was to have been effected by subscription, failed by the death of Chevalier Zulian, its chief promoter, in 1795. The model being thus left on hand, without any prospect of its being carried into execution, Canova adopted the same idea for the monument of the Arch Duchess Christina, reducing however the dimensions,

and with considerable alterations in the groups. The opportunity of restoring to its original state and colossal proportions, this beautiful composition, far more suitable to a consummate artist than a pious princess, and perhaps even better adapted to a sculptor than a painter; the absence of all rivalry in the adoption of the design of him whom all considered as a master; and the means it afforded of employing at the same time the numerous sculptors who were anxious to pay homage to the memory of Canova, all concurred to justify the choice of this model, formed by the hand of Canova himself.

During the last years of his life, Canova was much occupied with a plan for the erection of a church in his own native village of Possagno. This project grew out of another which he had conceived upon the return of the Pope to Rome from his exile in France. Though totally free from affectation and fanaticism, Canova was deeply and sincerely religious, a quality which seems indeed to be almost implied in the strong sensibility to the beauty and sublimity of nature that constitutes the principle of genius. The extraordinary character of the political revolutions of 1814, considered particularly in their influence on the interests of the church, produced so powerful an impression on his mind, that he was desirous of commemorating them by a work of his own art. He accordingly prepared a model of a statue of *Religion*, personified under the form of a colossal female figure, of the height of thirty palms, which he intended to execute at his own expense, and erect in some one of the principal churches at Rome.

‘By the completion of this design,’ says the biographer, ‘the present age would have possessed a wonder of art and sublimity to which it has never yet seen anything equal, emanating too solely and spontaneously from the mind of the artist, wholly uninstituted and unaided by extraneous means. All Europe

looked forward to see it adding to the glory of the Vatican, or adorning the magnificent expanse of the Pantheon. Already the model was completed, the marble disposed, and the chisel of the sculptor suspended until the signal of authority should be given by pointing out a place for its reception. It will be for history to explain the causes of the frustration of this devout and magnanimous design; and perhaps it may be found needful to draw a veil over the motives to which it may be traced. Posterity will with difficulty believe, that no place could be found at Rome for the reception of the sacred image of Religion. It is however certain, that the model remained for many years the object of public admiration, a masterly engraving being made from it with the following inscription, *Pro felici reditu Pii VII. Pontificis maximi Religionis formam sua impensa in marmore exculpendam Antonius Canova libens fecit et dedicavit*; and that finally it was worked in marble, a little above the natural size, by order of Lord Brownlow. The emblom of Catholicism was thus rejected from the Tiber, and found refuge on the banks of the Thames.

‘This extraordinary circumstance did not, however, depress the mind of Canova, who, actuated by the deepest religious feelings, had already formed the design of consecrating his fortune and the last efforts of his genius to the commemoration of a period in which the inscrutable decrees of Providence had been so remarkably displayed. That the statue which he had projected for this pious purpose might not be profaned by any less sacred use, he resolved on raising a temple for its reception in his native village, to be enriched with the productions of his chisel; by which means also he would open a perpetual source of prosperity for Possagno, in the concourse of workmen, the visits of strangers, and the expenditure of his entire fortune. The first stone of this sumptuous edifice was accordingly laid in July, 1819, amidst an immense concourse of people, with all the solemnities of religion, and the deep emotions of the assembly. But the artist had not foreseen, that this design would require an infinitely greater expenditure than that of the colossal statue; to supply which it became necessary for him to renew his labors, and to undertake fresh commissions. Accordingly he set about new statues,

groups, and monuments, working incessantly, and with all the ardor of his youthful application ; his mind always intent on the great object of his pious wishes. It is not improbable, that this greatly increased exertion, and the mental excitation consequent on it, tended to accelerate the termination of his existence.'

The church, as we learn from one of the preceding extracts, is now nearly completed, and will doubtless be finished by the piety of the friends and patrons of the great sculptor and his art ; but what hand is competent to take the place of his in executing the statue which was to have been its principal ornament ? It is singular indeed that objections should have been made to the erection of such a monument at Rome. We have no further information whatever respecting their nature, than is given in the above extracts. The model, of which there is an engraving in the work before us, is certainly conceived in the highest style of sublimity ; and if executed with the usual felicity of the artist, and on the grand scale which he had intended, would have been perhaps the noblest effort of his chisel and of modern sculpture.



## SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.\*

[North American Review, October, 1832.]

SINCE the decease of Stewart, Sir James Mackintosh has been generally considered as the first living writer on Moral Philosophy in the English language. Until the publication of the work before us, his reputation as such had not been justified by any extensive, elaborate or scientific work, and was rather imperfectly sustained by his Introductory Lecture on the Law of Nations, by various anonymous publications in the leading periodical journals, and by the fame of his brilliant and powerful conversation. Political and professional pursuits had probably occupied much of the time which he would otherwise have devoted to what seems to have been through life his favorite study. The present volume will not entirely supply the deficiency which was felt before, and hardly does full justice to his great talents and various learning. It is, however, a very interesting and valuable production. We were preparing to give it the notice to which it is so well entitled by its intrinsic importance and the celebrity of the author, when intelligence was received in this country of his untimely death. We call it untimely, for although he was somewhat advanced in years, and had nearly reached the ordinary term of human life, his intellect and literary activity appeared to be

\* *A General View of the Progress of Ethical Philosophy, chiefly during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. By the Right Honorable Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, LL. D. F. R. S. M. P. 8vo. Philadelphia. 1832.*

constantly increasing. This fact had encouraged the expectation that he was destined to enjoy a protracted, fruitful and glorious old age. The lamented event which has disappointed these hopes augments our interest in the work before us, which now remains the only formal record of his mature opinions upon the most momentous of all subjects. Before we proceed to notice it, it may not be improper to offer a brief sketch of the leading events of his life.

Sir James Mackintosh was born in the small parish of Dorish, in the county of Inverness, in Scotland, on the 24th of October, 1765. His family was a branch of one of the principal Highland clans, and his father, who was a captain in the army, had little to bequeath to him but an honorable name. Through the kindness of some of his relations, who discerned the early promise of his future greatness, he was enabled to pursue the studies necessary to a liberal profession; and in the year 1787, he took the degree of doctor of medicine in the university of Edinburgh. Some of our fellow-citizens, who were then pursuing their studies at that seat of learning, recollect him as a youth of ardent curiosity, wide research, engaging manners and brilliant conversation. Although the necessity of providing for his personal wants had compelled him to choose a profession, the superior attractions of polite literature and philosophy prevented him from studying it with any great earnestness, and it is understood that his attention to medicine was little more than formal. He, however, wrote and submitted to the medical faculty, on taking his degree, a Latin dissertation on muscular action, which was probably his first literary production, and which has since been republished. We are not informed in regard to its merit. Soon after leaving the university, he repaired to London, ostensibly for the purpose of practising as a physician.

It is probable, however, that he had no very serious intention of making the practice of medicine the occupation of his life; for we find him, immediately after his arrival at London, entering with zeal into political controversy. The King, George III., was at that time suffering under his first attack of insanity, and the great question of the day was the Regency. Mr. Pitt, the minister, maintained that the power of the Prince of Wales as Regent should be strictly limited; while Fox, the leader of the opposition, who enjoyed the confidence of the Prince, struggled to obtain for him nearly the whole extent of the Royal prerogative. Mackintosh made his *début* as a political writer, by the publication of a pamphlet in support of the views of Fox. The work attracted very little notice; and the author, disgusted perhaps at the indifference of the public, turned his thoughts for a time more intently upon his profession. For the purpose of increasing his qualifications for it, he visited Leyden, then the most celebrated medical school in Europe, and afterwards travelled in some other parts of the Netherlands. Soon after his return to London, his father died and bequeathed to him a small landed property in Scotland. Whether in consequence of this change of circumstances, or for some other reason of which we are not informed, he now quitted the profession of medicine, and entered his name as a student of law at Lincoln's Inn; where after the usual course of preliminary studies, he was regularly admitted to the bar. In 1789 he married Miss Stuart, a Scottish lady, residing at London, without beauty or fortune,—but of great intelligence and most amiable character.

That year will be forever memorable in the annals of the world, as the one which brought with it the opening of the French Revolution. The public mind in all parts of Europe was agitated by the same causes which

produced the crisis in France. Mackintosh, like most other persons of his age, temperament and position in the world, sympathized ardently with the friends of reform, and waited with eager impatience for a suitable opportunity to take the field as a literary combatant on their side. This opportunity was soon afforded by the publication of Edmund Burke's celebrated *Reflections on the French Revolution*. Burke, though he had been through life an ardent, consistent, and doubtless most sincere champion of popular principles of government, — though he had sustained with all his might the cause of this country against the British ministry, during the controversies that preceded our war of Independence, — did not feel himself obliged to patronize Revolution, merely as such, wherever it broke out; — and looking at that of France by the lights of his long experience, deep learning and admirable sagacity, he thought he saw in it a tendency to anarchy, disorganization and national ruin, rather than reform and liberty. With him, no opinion was ever adopted in a moderate or half-way form. Having taken up an unfavorable notion of the French Revolution, he thundered it forth to the world in his *Reflections* with a power of reasoning and a splendor of eloquence, which he had never reached before, and which no other political writer has perhaps ever equalled. It was, however, to borrow a figure from Lord Byron, —

— 'A thundergust against the wind.'

The current of public opinion continued for a long time to set with overwhelming force in England, as it did every where else, in favor of the revolution; and the mighty champion who had thrown down the gauntlet on the other side was forthwith met by a host of volunteers of all ages, sexes and characters. The first answer that appeared, was a pamphlet by Mary Wolstoncraft, the

renowned advocate of the Rights of Woman. It was on this occasion that Paine published his well-known Rights of Man. While preparing that work, Paine heard from a common friend that Mackintosh was also engaged upon an answer to Burke, and is said to have sent him the following polite message :— ' Tell your friend Mackintosh that if he do not make haste, my work against Burke will be published ; after which nothing more on that subject will be read.' Such, however, was the fatuity of the public, that neither the labors of the political stay-maker, — such was the profession of Paine, — nor those of his fair customer, were thought to supersede entirely the necessity of further reply to the terrible Reflections. In the spring of 1791, Mackintosh published his answer, under the title of '*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, or a Defence of the French Revolution and its English admirers against the accusations of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, including some strictures on the late production of Mr. De Calonne.'

This work evinces a remarkable degree of talent, although it possesses very little substantial and permanent value. The style is excellent, and distinguished the author immediately as one of the most powerful and elegant writers in the language. In this particular he sustains very well the dangerous comparison with his giant antagonist. To say this, is, of course, to give him the highest praise. As respects the substance, he appears to less advantage. At the present day, when we have all acquired upon this subject the tardy and worthless wisdom which follows the event, it is but too plain that the combatants are no other than Philip intoxicated and Philip sober. In talents, learning, eloquence, zeal, uprightness of purpose, warmth of heart, they are very well matched ; but Mackintosh gives us the frothy effervescence of an immature mind which is still in a state of

fermentation, while in Burke we have the pure, ripe, golden, glowing nectar. Mackintosh glances hastily at the surface of society. Burke penetrates the mass, and spreads before us, with unerring truth and sagacity, the principles that hold it together and regulate its internal action. Burke found at the time very little sympathy either among reflecting men or with the body of the people; and even now, although his practical conclusions have been confirmed by the event, and are generally acquiesced in, the public mind has no where,—no not even in England,—reached the elevation of his theory. If it had, we should not witness the scenes that are now acting on the theatre of Europe. Independently of the feebleness of his general reasoning as compared with that of Burke, the work of Mackintosh was unfortunate in being for the most part a defence of the specific form of government established in France by the States General at the opening of the Revolution. This cobweb constitution, for which the too sanguine friends of liberty had vainly predicted a perennial durability, was swept into nothing the next year; and with it disappeared in a great measure the point and value of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*. In the mean time, however, the work had attracted much attention,—had passed rapidly through three editions, and had rendered the author a person of consequence among those who shared his principles and feelings.

As this work is rather scarce and not likely to be soon republished, we present the following extract as a specimen of its style and principles. The views it expresses in regard to the British Constitution, which the author himself very soon abandoned, have become, within two or three years, by the late singular revolution of feeling in England, almost universal, and have actually led to the adoption of the momentous and once so much derided measure of *Parliamentary Reform*. What their further

consequences will be, the history of the next ten years will determine.

'Who can, without indignation, hear the House of Commons of England called a popular representation? A more insolent and preposterous abuse of language is not to be found in the vocabulary of tyrants. The criterion that distinguishes laws from dictates, freedom from servitude, rightful government from usurpation, the law being an expression of the general will, is wanting.

'We are boldly challenged to produce our proofs; our complaints are asserted to be chimerical, and the excellence of our government is inferred from its beneficial effects. Most unfortunately for us, most unfortunately for our country, these proofs are too ready and too numerous. We find them in that "monumental debt," the bequest of wasteful and profligate wars, which already wrings from the peasant something of his hard-earned pittance; which already has punished the industry of the useful and upright manufacturer, by robbing him of the asylum of his house, and the judgment of his peers; to which the madness of political Quixotism adds a million for every farthing that the pomp of ministerial empiricism pays; and which menaces our children with convulsions and calamities of which no age has seen the parallel. We find them in the black and bloody roll of persecuting statutes that are still suffered to stain our code; a list so execrable, that were no monument to be preserved of what England was in the eighteenth century but her statute book, she might be deemed still plunged into the deepest gloom of superstitious barbarism. We find them in the ignominious exclusion of great bodies of our fellow-citizens from political trusts, by tests which reward falsehood and punish probity, which profane the rights of the religion they pretend to guard, and usurp the dominion of the God they profess to revere. We find them in the growing corruption of those who administer the government,—in the venality of a House of Commons which has become only a cumbrous and expensive chamber for registering ministerial edicts,—in the increase of a nobility arrived to a degradation, by the profusion and prostitution of honors, which the most zealous partisans of democracy would have spared them. We find them, above all, in the rapid progress which has been made to

silence the great organ of public opinion, the Press, which is the true control on ministers and parliaments; who might else, with impunity, trample on the impotent formalities that form the pretended bulwark of our freedom. The mutual control, the well-poised balance of the several members of our legislature, are the visions of theoretical, or the pretext of practical, politicians. It is a government, not of check, but of conspiracy,—a conspiracy which can only be repressed by the energy of popular opinion.'

At about the same time when Mackintosh was writing his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, or shortly after, M. de Châteaubriand, then an exile from his country, also wrote and published at London a work, entitled an Essay on Revolutions, which has almost the same general characteristics with the *Vindiciæ*, but is even more extravagant both in substance and style. The similarity between these two productions shows how naturally they resulted from the influence of the existing state of political affairs upon the public mind. The authors of both, under the guidance of the great teacher, Experience, afterwards reformed their political theories, and without going as is too often the case with disenchanted enthusiasts,—to the opposite extreme, have sustained through life in word and in action, the reputation of moderate and yet vigorous, consistent and persevering friends of liberty.

In the case of Mackintosh, the natural operation of Experience in correcting the wild enthusiasm of youth, was aided by the effect of a personal acquaintance with his illustrious opponent. Not long after the publication of the *Vindiciæ*, a person who was desirous to obtain, through the influence of Burke, an employment under Government, prevailed upon Mackintosh to write a letter in his favor to the philosopher of Beaconsfield. Mackintosh, although at that time personally unknown to Burke, executed the task in his powerful and elegant manner. Burke, of course, replied, and a correspondence followed



which ended by an invitation to Mackintosh to visit him at his villa. The proposal was accepted, and after passing a few days and nights in this more than Tusculan retreat, the champion of the French Revolution returned to London, and frankly avowed to his confidential associates, that he was a convert to the opinions of his great antagonist. Few literary documents would be more interesting, than an ample record of the conversations that were held during this visit by these two illustrious friends of liberty and virtue. Instead of the shock between two opposite forms of ignorance and prejudice, which constitutes the staple of most controversies, and can of course end in nothing but mutual exasperation, we should have seen a polite and friendly encounter of men of equal wit and learning, comparing the somewhat various results of an equally honest enquiry, and concluding, — as such comparisons might be generally expected to terminate, — in mutual agreement. Such a work would furnish political and moral lessons, more directly applicable to the exigencies of the present time, than any existing treatise with which we are acquainted. Unfortunately there are, — so far as we are informed, — no traces of these conversations in existence. The general scope of the argument on both sides may easily be conjectured from the writings of the two parties, and an attempt to throw it into the form of dialogue, in the manner of Plato and Cicero, would furnish a very agreeable employment to any one who loves to exercise his mind upon the noblest objects of meditation and study.

Although Mackintosh adopted at this time the moderate and rational view of liberal principles, to which he adhered through life, he made no public avowal of any change of sentiment, sent in no adhesion to the ruling powers of the day, and received from them no proofs of satisfaction or confidence in the shape of emolument or

office. His conversion is therefore entirely free from any suspicion of interested motives. The alteration that had taken place in his opinions was in fact unknown to the public, who continued to class him, as the author of the *Vindicia*, with the most violent adherents of the revolutionary party. Hence, when he applied soon after for the use of the great hall of Lincoln's Inn, for the purpose of delivering a course of lectures on the Law of Nations, the society of lawyers, who held the property of the building, refused to grant his request, on the ground that they did not choose to convert their apartment into a theatre for the promulgation of Jacobinism. Even the intercession of Mr. Pitt did not remove the difficulty; and it was not till Lord Loughborough, who, as Chancellor, had some authority in the matter, interfered, that a favorable answer was finally secured.

This course of lectures was fully attended by a most respectable audience, and established the high reputation which the author had acquired for talent and eloquence, while it exhibited him in the light of a more correct and profound thinker than he had shown himself in his previous productions. It is, we believe, substantially the same which he has since delivered in his capacity of Professor of Public Law at the East-India College. The Introductory Lecture was published at the time, and is one of the most valuable and important of his printed works. We cannot doubt, that the whole course will be brought before the world; and if the other Lectures compare at all in merit with the first, the work must become at once the standard and text-book of the great sciences of Natural and National Law.

Mackintosh had been, as we have remarked, admitted to the bar, but whether from disinclination or want of aptitude for the details of legal practice, it does not appear that he was much employed. We hear very little

of his exertions in this field, excepting from his defence of Peltier, in the year 1802. Peltier was a French emigrant, who published a newspaper at London, in which he had inserted a pretty severe article upon Bonaparte, then in the freshness of his honors as First Consul. The peace of Amiens had just been concluded, and Bonaparte not thinking it consistent with the friendly relations between the two countries, that he should be libelled at London, prevailed upon the ministry to bring Peltier to trial. Mackintosh appeared as his advocate, and delivered on the occasion an oration in defence of the liberty of the press, which is certainly one of the most elaborate and finished specimens of modern eloquence. We are not sure, that there is any single speech in the English language, which can fairly be compared with it. The subject was in fact *unique*, and afforded the finest possible scope for the talent of the advocate, who having been, on the other hand, particularly adapted by his taste and trained by discipline and study to the line of argument which it required, was uncommonly well fitted to do justice to it.

This effort produced a strong impression at the moment in favor of the author's powers. Although it did not effect the acquittal of Peltier, who was too clearly within the scope of the law to escape a verdict, it was highly complimented by the court, and was read with great admiration when it appeared in print. It would probably have introduced Mackintosh into a larger and more lucrative course of practice. In the mean time, however, he found himself without fortune, with a large and increasing family, and of course in circumstances that did not permit him to wait very patiently for the results of the slow progress of his professional fame. Soon after his appearance in this great cause, he accepted the place of Recorder of Bombay,—the first judicial office in that

colony, — which promised an ample income and literary leisure, at the cost of expatriation, and too probably, as the event proved, the loss of health. On this occasion, Mackintosh received the honor of Knighthood. He had previously lost his first wife, and espoused, in second nuptials, Miss Allen, of Pembroke, who, with several children, accompanied him on his voyage to the East.

It is not very honorable to the discernment of the government, that they should have permitted the expatriation for so many of the best years of his life, of one of the master spirits of the country, whose proper sphere of action was the centre of business at home : and it is much to be regretted, that private considerations rendered it expedient for Sir James to consent to the proposal. While he remained abroad, he discharged his official duties with great distinction, and contributed, by his high intellectual and moral qualities, to elevate the standard of civilization in the remote colony where he resided. He founded a literary society at Bombay, as Sir William Jones had done at Calcutta ; but did not engage with the same ardor in the study of the oriental languages and literature, with which his acquaintance was very limited. After a residence in India of about ten years, he found his health impaired by the effect of the climate, and returned to England with his fortune very little if at all improved, and with a liver complaint which adhered to him for the rest of his life, and finally conducted him to an untimely grave.

Soon after his return to England, Sir James was placed in parliament for one of the nomination boroughs, and was regularly returned to every succeeding parliament for the rest of his life. These boroughs, however irregular in principle, were practically a very convenient method of securing to the public the services of many of the best qualified men, who would otherwise have found it

difficult to obtain a seat. In parliament he acted uniformly with the whigs on the great points of foreign and domestic policy, such as Catholic Emancipation, Parliamentary Reform, and the like; but always professed their principles in a moderate and judicious shape. On the questions connected with neutral rights, which grew out of the relations between Great Britain and this country, he co-operated actively and ably with his friend, Mr. Brougham, in support of the liberal side. After the close of the war, he took occasion, in one of his speeches in the House of Commons, to compliment the American commissioners at Ghent, upon their 'astonishing superiority' over their opponents. In other speeches and in his writings, he has often spoken in friendly and favorable terms of this country. This candid,—perhaps partial disposition, in one whose opinion was authority, coming into contrast as it did with the meanness and illiberality of many of his contemporaries, had so much endeared the name of Sir James Mackintosh to our citizens that he was generally styled in the newspapers whenever he was mentioned, *the friend of America*. A report, which was spread soon after the entrance into power of the present ministry, that he was coming out to reside among us as British minister, was heard with much satisfaction, and there cannot be a doubt that his reception would have been of the most gratifying character. We are not informed whether there was any foundation for this report, but at this time his health was probably too much impaired to admit of his encountering the trials of a long voyage and a new climate.

The questions upon which he spoke in parliament most frequently were those of foreign policy and international law. His eloquence was of a dignified, manly and imposing character. His manner was not particularly graceful, and he had a slight Scotch accent; but his lan-

guage was flowing, copious, energetic and elegant, and above all carried with it to the minds of his hearers the rich gifts of profound and original thought. The delightful combination of philosophy and taste was exhibited by Mackintosh in higher perfection than it had been by any parliamentary orator since the time of Burke, not excepting even Canning, who yet exemplified it in a very remarkable degree. The eloquence of Sir James was far more finished than that of Brougham, although the latter, from his superior activity and industry, possessed a greater share of political influence, and has finally made a much more brilliant fortune in the world. Sir James, however, had the state of his health permitted, would have probably been Secretary of Foreign Affairs under Lord Grey, and after having been nailed for much of his life to the north wall of opposition, and suffered a good deal from pecuniary embarrassments, would have found the evening of his days gilded and cheered with the southern sun of power and fortune. This was denied him, and the only temporal reward which he received for his labors and studies was a great but dowerless fame. It is indeed rather lamentable that in a country where jobs and pensions were quite *à l'ordre du jour*, there should have been found no employment that could afford a competency at home to a person whose genius was an honor to the age, and with the advantage of an easier position in the world would have enabled him to realize more completely than perhaps any of the moderns have yet done, the beautiful union of talents, virtues and graces, that distinguished the character of the illustrious Roman orator, to which his own bore in its leading traits a marked resemblance.

His passionate devotion to letters undoubtedly co-operated with the feeble state of his health, after his return to Europe, to diminish his professional and political

activity. He projected early in life a great work on the history of his country, and collected materials with much assiduity, but does not appear to have commenced the execution of the task until a short time before his death. He then undertook an abridgement of the history of England, for the Cabinet Cyclopaedia, of which he afterwards extended the plan, so that, had he finished it, it would probably have furnished a pretty complete account of the period subsequent to the Revolution of 1688. Unfortunately he lived to publish only two volumes, and to prepare a third, which he is said to have left in manuscript, making less than half of the entire work, which would have reached to eight. These three volumes, with the work before us and a life of Sir Thomas More, constitute, we believe, in addition to those which we have already mentioned, the whole of his acknowledged productions. They form a scanty product for so long and careful a cultivation of so rich a soil. It is understood, that Sir James was also the author of some of the best articles in the Edinburgh Review. His writings, whether fugitive or studied, are uniformly distinguished by original thought, and a noble and elegant flow of language. Even his private letters, some of which have crept into print, have the air of finished compositions. We trust that measures will be taken immediately for collecting the whole of his works, acknowledged or anonymous, with such of his manuscripts as are in the state of publication, and as large an amount of his correspondence as can be procured. In the mean time, we learn with pleasure that it is intended by some of our own booksellers to publish immediately a selection from his works in this city.

Although Sir James possessed a great aptitude and talent for literary composition, it is understood, notwithstanding, that the intellectual exercise in which he

most delighted was conversation. This was probably the field in which he exhibited his fine powers and various learning with more satisfaction to himself than in any other; and it must be owned, that for those who are capable of it, the pleasure of animated and intellectual conversation is hardly inferior to the high excitement of public speaking, and very far beyond the solitary delights of the pen. Sir James was regarded, by the elevated and brilliant circle with which he was connected, as the great living master of moral and political philosophy; and delivered his oracles at the dinner table or in the fashionable saloon, with the authority, and nearly the power but without the rudeness of the great moralist of the preceding generation, whose savage deportment excluded him from polished society.\* Sir James was remarkable

\* The writer of this article had the honor of a personal introduction to Sir James Mackintosh, while on a visit to London, in the year 1817, and, during that and some other subsequent visits, enjoyed a good deal of his society. He was much struck with the copiousness, elegance, originality and point of Sir James's conversation, and made a memorandum, at the time, of a few of his remarks, which, with some omissions, is here inserted.

‘Shakspeare, Milton, Locke and Newton, are four names beyond competition superior to any that the continent can put against them. It was a proof of singular and very graceful modesty in Gray, that after bestowing upon Shakspeare a high eulogium in the Progress of Poetry, he did not, when proceeding to the character of Milton, rashly decide upon their relative merit. Every half-read critic affirms at once, according to his peculiar taste or the caprice of the moment, that one or the other is the superior poet; but when Gray comes to Milton, he only says, —

“Nor second he that rode sublime  
Upon the seraph wings of ecstasy.”

‘Dryden he assigns to an inferior class, —

“Behold where Dryden's less presumptuous car,  
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear  
Two coursers of inferior race,” &c.’

The writer observed that the German critics call Dryden a man walking on stilts in a marsh. — *Sir James* — ‘Depend upon it, they do not understand the language. — Shakspeare's great superiority over other writers consists in his deep knowledge of human nature. Châteaubriand says of



on the contrary, for the affability and ease of his manners. His moral qualities corresponded very well with the elevation of his intellectual character. His feelings

him, '*Il a souvent des mots terribles.*' It has been thought by some that those observations upon human nature which appear so profound and remarkable, may, after all, lie nearest to the surface, and be taken up most naturally by the early writers in every language; but we do not find them in Homer. Homer is the finest ballad writer in any language. The flow and fullness of his style is beautiful; but he has nothing of the deep, piercing observation of Shakspeare.'

The writer mentioned that he had been at St Paul's, and spoke of the statues of Johnson, Sir William Jones, and others that he had seen there. *Sir James* — 'It is a noble edifice, to be sure, and we have some great men there; but it would be too much to expect that the glory of the second temple should equal that of the first. One country is not sufficient for two such repositories as Westminster Abbey. — Boswell's *Life of Johnson* has given a wrong impression of him in some respects. When we see four large volumes written upon a man's conversation, through a period of forty years, and his remarks alone set down, of all those made at the time, we naturally take the idea that Johnson was the central point of society for all that period. The truth is, he never was in good society; at least in those circles where men of letters mix with the fashionable world. His brutal, intolerant manners excluded him from it, of course. He met good society, to be sure, at the Literary Club and at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. — Gibbon was asked why he did not talk more in the presence of Dr. Johnson. "Sir," replied the historian, taking a pinch of snuff, "I have no pretensions to the ability of contending with Dr. Johnson in brutality and insolence."

'Sir William Jones was not a man of first-rate talent, — he had great facility of acquisition, but not a mind of the highest order. Reason and imagination are the two great intellectual faculties, and he was certainly not pre-eminent in either. His poetry is indifferent, and his other writings are agreeable, but not profound. He was, however, a most amiable and excellent man.'

Speaking of the poets of the day, Sir James observed, — 'I very much doubt whether Scott will survive long. Hitherto nothing has stood the test of time, but labored and finished verse, and of this Scott has none. If I were to say which of the poets of the day is most likely to be read hereafter, I should give my opinion in favor of some of Campbell's poems. Scott, however, has a wonderful fertility and vivacity.' It may be proper to add that the allusion is here exclusively to the poetry of Scott. The *Waverley* novels were not generally attributed to him at the time when the remark was made.

♦ *Rogers's Pleasures of Memory* has one good line, —

were naturally lofty and generous. He drew from his own consciousness that conviction of the reality of benevolent sentiments, which, as we shall presently see, he

"The only pleasures we can call our own."

It is remarkable that this poem is very popular. A new edition of it is printed every year. It brings the author in about 200*l.* per annum, and yet its principal merit is its finished, perfect versification, which one would think the people could hardly enjoy. The subject, however, recommends itself very much to all classes of readers.

The writer commended highly the language of Sir William Scott's opinions. *Sir James* — 'There is a little too much elegance for judicial dicta, and a little unfairness in always attempting to found the judgment upon the circumstances of the case, perhaps slight ones, rather than general principles. Sir William is one of the most entertaining men to be met with in society. His style is by no means so pure and classical as that of Blackstone, which is one of the finest models in the English language. Middleton and he are the two best in their way of the writers of their period. Middleton's Free Inquiry is an instance of great prudence and moderation in drawing conclusions respecting particular facts from general principles. His premises would have carried him much further than he has gone. There are many fine passages in his *Life of Cicero*.'

Sir James said that he had received from Mr. Wortman a collection of specimens of American eloquence, and that Mr. Wortman had given it as his opinion, that the faculty of eloquence was more general in America than in England, though some individual Englishmen might perhaps possess it in a higher degree. The writer remarked that he thought our best orators but little inferior to the best orators of the present day in England; and mentioned Mr. Otis, Mr. Randolph, and Mr. Pinkney. *Sir James* — 'I have not seen any of Mr. Otis's speeches. I have read some of Randolph's, but the effect must depend very much upon the manner. There is a good deal of vulgar finery. Malice there is, too, but that would be excusable, provided it were in good taste.'

'Mr. Adams's Defence of the Constitution is not a first-rate work. He lays too much stress upon the examples of small and insignificant States, and looks too much at the external form of governments, which is, in general, a very indifferent criterion of their character. His fundamental principle of securing government, by a balance of power between two houses and an executive, does not strike me as very just or important. It is a mere puerility to suppose that three branches, and no more nor less, are essential to political salvation. In this country, where there are nominally three branches, the real sovereignty resides in the House of Commons. Two branches are no doubt expedient, as far as they induce deliberation and mature judgment on the measures proposed.'

has so well expressed in the work before us. He wanted the restless activity which prompts some men to constant exertion, and the steady prudence which leads them to husband regularly, with strict economy, the fruits of their

The writer mentioned Mr. Adams's opinion, (as expressed in a letter to Dr. Price) that the French Revolution failed because the legislative body consisted of one branch, and not two. *Sir James*—'That circumstance may have precipitated matters a little, but the degraded situation of the *Tiers Etat* was the principal cause of the failure. The entire separation in society between the *noblesse* and the professions destroyed the respectability of the latter, and deprived them in a great degree of popular confidence. In England, eminent and successful professional men rise to an equality in importance and rank with the first nobles, take by much the larger share in the government, and bring with them to it the confidence of the people. This will forever prevent any popular revolution in the country. The *Federalist* is a well written work.

'The remarkable private morality of the New England States is worth attention, especially when taken in connection with the very moral character of the poorer people in Scotland, Holland and Switzerland. It is rather singular that all these countries, which are more moral than any others, are precisely those in which *Calvinism* is predominant.' The writer mentioned that Boston and Cambridge had in a great measure abandoned Calvinism. *Sir James*—'I am rather surprised at that; but the same thing has happened in other places similarly situated. Boston, Geneva and Edinburgh might once have been considered as the three high places of Calvinism, and the enemy is now, it seems, in full possession of them all. The fact appears to be a consequence of the principle of reaction, which operates as universally in the moral as in the physical world. Jonathan Edwards was a man of great merit. His *Treatise on the Will* is a most profound and acute disquisition. The English Calvinists have produced nothing to be put in competition with it. He was one of the greatest men who have owned the authority of Calvin, and there have been a great many. Calvin himself had a very strong and acute mind.—Sir Henry Vane was one of the most profound minds that ever existed, not inferior, perhaps, to Bacon. Milton has a fine sonnet addressed to him,—

"Vane, young in years, in sage experience old."

His works, which are theological, are extremely rare, and display astonishing powers. They are remarkable as containing the first direct assertion of the liberty of conscience. He was put to death in a most perfidious manner. I am proud, as a friend of liberty, and as an Englishman, of the men that resisted the tyranny of Charles I. Even when they went to execution, and put to death the king, they did it in a much more decorous man-

labors. Had he combined these humbler virtues with his higher endowments, his lot in life would have proba-

ner than their imitators in France. Thomson says of them with great justice in his florid way,—

"First at thy call, her age of men effuiged," &c.

'Eloquence is the power of gaining your purpose by words. All the labored definitions of it to be found in the different rhetorical works amount in substance to this. It does not, therefore, require or admit the strained and false ornaments that are taken for it by some. I hate these artificial flowers without fragrance or fitness. Nobody ever succeeded in this way but Burke. Fox used to say, "I cannot bear this thing in anybody but Burke, and he cannot help it. It is his natural manner."—Sir Francis Burdett is one of the best of our speakers, take him altogether, voice, figure and manner. His voice is the best that can be imagined. As to his matter he certainly speaks above his mind. He is not a man of very superior talents, though respectable.—Plunkett, if he had come earlier into Parliament, so as to have learned the trade, would probably have excelled all our orators. He and counsellor Phillips (or O'Garnish, as he is nicknamed here,) are at the opposite points of the scale. O'Garnish's style is pitiful to the last degree. He ought by common consent to be driven from the bar.—Mr. Wilberforce's voice is beautiful; his manner mild and perfectly natural. He has no artificial ornament; but an easy, natural image occasionally springs up in his mind that pleases very much.—Cicero's orations are a good deal in the flowery, artificial manner, though the best specimens in their way. We tire in reading them. Cicero, though a much greater man than Demosthenes, take him altogether, was inferior to him as an orator. To be the second orator the world has produced is, however, praise enough.—Pascal was a prodigy. His *Pensées* are wonderfully profound and acute. Though predicated on his peculiar way of thinking, they are not on that account to be condemned. I dislike the illiberality of some of my liberal friends, who will not allow any merit to any thing that does not agree with their own point of view. Making allowance for Pascal's way of looking at things, and expressing himself, his ideas are prodigiously deep and correct.—Most of the apparent absurdities in theology and metaphysics are important truths, exaggerated and disfigured by an incorrect manner of understanding or expressing them; as for instance, the doctrines of transubstantiation and of total depravity. Jacob Bryant was a miserable writer, though for particular purposes it was thought expedient at one time to sustain his reputation. He was guilty of a gross absurdity in attempting such a work as his principal one without any oriental learning, which he did not even profess. Yet Sir William Jones called him the principal writer of his time. This opinion quite takes away the value of Sir William's critical judgment.'

bly been somewhat different. It was however, a sufficiently enviable one. He ranked with the highest class of England's intellectual peerage, and possessed the richest of all treasures in a heart overflowing with benevolent affections. Without affectation or fanaticism, he was sincerely and deeply religious. If there be, — as we all believe and hope, — another and a better world, where the wise and good repose together from the troubles of this, we cannot doubt that Mackintosh is now among its favored tenants, — enjoying the communion of the high and gifted minds whom he always so much loved and admired, the Platos, the Stewarts, the Burkes, the Ciceros, — and dwelling in the nearer presence of that Sublime Spirit, whose ineffable glories he has so eloquently though faintly shadowed forth in so many splendid passages of his writings. If his friends lament the change, it must be for their sakes, and not for his.

‘ If that high world that lies beyond  
Our own, *surviving Love endears*,  
If there the cherished heart be fond,  
The eye the same, excepting tears,  
How welcome those untrodden spheres!  
How sweet this very hour to die!  
To soar from earth, and find all fears  
Lost in thy light, Eternity!’

Having taken this hasty survey of the political and literary career of Sir James Mackintosh, we proceed to notice in the concise form which alone the space remaining to us will now permit, the work before us.

The first question in the theory of Ethics, is that which arises between those who admit, and those who deny the reality of moral distinctions. This was almost the only one agitated in the ancient schools of philosophy. Socrates, who is known to us by the charming dialogues

of Plato and Zenophon, assumed the reality of virtue and illustrated its beauty, without engaging in any metaphysical speculations upon its nature. The Stoics, with some variations of form, pursued substantially the same course. Epicurus, on the other hand, denied the reality of virtue, and placed the only principle of action in pleasure. His followers in modern times, from Gassendi and Hobbes to Bentham, have professed the same theory. With them there is of course no question about the nature of a distinction, which they do not believe to exist. To those who admit the reality of moral distinction, the further questions arise, In what do they consist; and by what faculties do we take cognizance of them? A correct solution of these questions would furnish the leading points in the theory of morals. None has yet been offered which has commanded the general assent of enlightened men; and strange as it may seem, the theory of this first and most important of all the sciences is yet unsettled. The history of Ethical Philosophy is therefore the history of the attempts which have been made, — thus far without success, — to solve the great problems alluded to above.

In the work before us, which was prepared as a preliminary dissertation to one of the volumes of the Edinburgh Encyclopædia, Sir James Mackintosh begins by briefly stating, in two introductory chapters, the objects of Ethical Science and the difficulties that are encountered in the prosecution of it. He then, in two more chapters, takes a hasty retrospect of the history of the Ethical Philosophy of the ancients and of the moderns, after which, he proceeds to the principal subject of the work, which is the history of philosophy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The subject divides itself into three principal parts.

1. The revival of the Epicurean doctrine by Hobbes and his followers, of whom the principal were Hume, the French metaphysicians, and Bentham.

2. The attempt of Cudworth and Clarke to found the reality of moral distinctions on a natural *fitness of things* cognizable by the understanding; and,

3. The attempt of various philosophers, from Shaftesbury to Stewart, including particularly Hutcheson and Butler, to prove the existence of a *moral sense* or feeling, by which we naturally and without any exercise of the understanding distinguish the right and wrong of actions, as we distinguish colors by the eye, and sounds by the ear.

The most natural mode of arranging the matter would perhaps have been to class together the writers who have respectively favored each of these different systems. Sir James has however not adopted this method, but has followed a strictly chronological one, beginning with Hobbes, and taking up the following writers in the order of time in which they wrote, without regard to their opinions. At the close of his summary of the opinions of each of the principal writers, he annexes his own observations on them, under the head of *Remarks*. In these remarks, he states and concisely develops a theory upon the general principles of Ethical Philosophy, which, if not entirely original, has never been proposed before in precisely the same form. The work bears throughout the marks of hasty preparation, and is no doubt chargeable with great deficiencies. The most remarkable of these is the absence of any notice of the ethical theories of the modern Germans, for which Sir James apologises on the ground of want of time and room. Probably his acquaintance with this branch of the subject was hardly sufficient to have enabled him to treat it satisfactorily to himself or the public. The omission is, however, fatal

to the value of the work as a complete treatise, since the German branch of the subject is unquestionably the most important of all. The French writers are also passed over almost without notice. The work is, in fact, a view of the progress of Philosophy in England, and does not include a more copious notice of foreigners than would probably have been introduced, had it been professedly confined to the author's country. This would perhaps have been the fairer and more judicious course. Even when considered as thus limited, the subject is still treated in a very concise way, the work being, as it is entitled, merely a general view.

Notwithstanding these deficiencies, it will be read with deep interest by students of moral science, and by all who take an interest in the higher departments of intellectual research, or enjoy the beauties of elegant language applied to the illustration of 'divine philosophy.' It gives us, on an important branch of the most important of the sciences, the reflections of one of the few master minds, that are fitted by original capacity and patient study to probe it to the bottom. It is highly interesting, whether we agree with him or not, to know the opinions of such a man upon the character of the principal ethical writers and upon the leading principles of the science. These opinions are exhibited with every advantage of language and manner. It is difficult to imagine how the union of power, dignity and grace, which may be supposed to constitute a finished style, can be carried further than it is in the writings of Sir James Mackintosh. The moral tone is also of the purest and most agreeable kind. The work breathes throughout a temperate enthusiasm in the cause of humanity, and a spirit of perfect toleration for opposite opinions, even of an exceptionable cast. The author asserts the reality of benevolent affections, and proves their existence in his own



heart by exercising charity towards those who differ from him even on vital questions. He condemns the heresy, but gives the heretic full credit, as far as it seems to be deserved, for sincerity and talents. He exercises also the — if possible — still more rare and difficult justice of a full, manly and generous acknowledgment of kindred merit in others. He does not labor under the impression so natural to ambitious mediocrity, that every word of praise bestowed upon another, is a leaf of laurel torn from his own garland. He enlarges with an overflowing fullness of heart, we may say, even to exaggeration, upon the merits of contemporaries. Under the influence of this generous and amiable impulse, he has probably overrated the deserts of Bentham, Brown and Stewart. But how much more noble is an error of this kind, than the petty jealousy which can see nothing in living excellence of any kind but an object of attack, as the wasp approaches the fairest fruits only for the purpose of piercing them to the core! It is indeed refreshing and delightful, to find one of the most powerful minds of the age uniting the best feelings with the highest gifts of intellect, and exemplifying in his own person the moral graces which he undertakes to teach. Such examples justify the more honorable view of human nature, and prove that the selfish and vicious, who habitually deny the reality of benevolence and virtue, draw a false general conclusion from their own individual case; forgetting that their consciousness gives them no authority except to 'speak for themselves.'

The form of the work is, therefore, such as will recommend it very strongly to the general reader, and will render it a useful and delightful study even to those who habitually take no interest in metaphysical researches. In the few observations which we propose to add upon the substance, we shall first notice some of the remarks

of the author upon the theories of other writers, and conclude by a brief examination of his own.

In entering on the field of enquiry which properly belongs to his subject, Sir James encounters at the threshold the startling paradoxes of the well-known philosopher of Malmesbury, Hobbes. — If the works of writers of eminence were examined with reference to their personal history, it would probably be found that their peculiarities, whether of style or doctrine, are, — more frequently than we should perhaps imagine, — the results in one form or another, of their own personal experience, and are of course very much colored by the circumstances under which they happened to live. The philosophy of Hobbes seems to have been a reaction against the wild excesses of the popular revolution that occurred in England in the seventeenth century. Alarmed at the horrors that were perpetrated by his countrymen as soon as they had shaken off the restraint of royal authority, Hobbes embraced the idea that the law, as proclaimed by government, is the only source of moral distinctions. If it be right to pay a debt, and wrong to commit murder, it is, according to Hobbes, only because one of these actions is commanded and the other prohibited by law. The disgust which he felt at the political forms under which the excesses of the Commonwealth had been committed, produced in his mind a preference for absolute monarchy, which was his system in politics; and the fanatical fury of the British reformers led him to adopt the notion that religion, as well as morals, ought to be entirely under the control of government. He denied the reality of benevolent affections, and considered personal pleasure or advantage as the only imaginable motive of action. Such were the leading points of his theory, which he proclaimed with a confidence that arrested the public attention, and an elegance of language that

enlisted the public taste on his side. The style of Hobbes is thus characterized by our author.

‘A permanent foundation of his fame consists in his admirable style, which seems to be the very perfection of didactic language. Short, clear, precise, pithy, his language never has more than one meaning, which it never requires a second thought to find. By the help of his exact method, it takes so firm a hold on the mind, that it will not allow attention to slacken. His little tract on *Human Nature* has scarcely an ambiguous or a needless word. He has so great a power of always choosing the most significant term, that he never is reduced to the poor expedient of using many in its stead. He had so thoroughly studied the genius of the language, and knew so well how to steer between pedantry and vulgarity, that two centuries have not superannuated probably more than a dozen of his words. His expressions are so luminous, that he is clear without the help of illustration. Perhaps no writer of any age or nation, on subjects so abstruse has manifested an equal power of engraving his thoughts on the minds of his readers. He seems never to have taken a word for ornament or pleasure; and he deals with eloquence and poetry, as the natural philosopher who explains the mechanism of children’s toys, or deigns to contrive them. Yet his style so stimulates attention, that it never tires; and to those who are acquainted with the subject, appears to have as much spirit as can safely be blended with reason. He composes his thoughts so unaffectedly, and yet so tersely, as to produce occasional maxims which excite the same agreeable surprise with wit, and have become a sort of philosophical proverbs; the success of which he partly owed to the suitability of such forms of expression to his dictatorial nature. His words have such an appearance of springing from his thoughts, as to impress on the reader a strong opinion of his originality, and indeed to prove that he was not conscious of borrowing; though conversation with Gassendi must have influenced his mind; and it is hard to believe that his coincidence with Ockham should have been purely accidental, on points so important as the denial of general ideas, the reference of moral distinctions to superior power, and the absolute thralldom of religion under the civil power, which he seems to have thought

necessary, to maintain that independence of the state on the church with which Ockham had been contented.'

The tremendous paradoxes of Hobbes excited a strong sensation throughout Europe, and have given occasion, directly or indirectly, to most of the works that have since appeared on Ethical Science. Sir Robert Filmer, Harrington, Clarendon, Bishop Cumberland, Cudworth, Clarke, Shaftesbury, Baxter and Hutcheson, all undertook to refute him with different weapons, and for different immediate purposes. The great work of Cudworth, entitled the *Intellectual System*, was written as an answer to Hobbes, but it was directed against his theological and metaphysical, rather than his ethical theories. The notions of Cudworth on the last subject were explained in several essays which he left in manuscript, and of which one only, the *Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, has been published. The rest (not much to the credit of British taste and liberality) are still locked up in the repositories of the British museum. In the *Immutable Morality*, Cudworth gives the introduction only to his ethical system, in which he describes the distinction between right and wrong, as inherent in nature, and independent of any power whether human or divine. 'The distinction of right from wrong is discerned by reason; and as soon as these words are defined, it becomes evident that it would be a contradiction in terms to affirm that any power, human or divine, could change their nature, or in other words make the same act just or unjust, at the same time. They had existed eternally in the only mode in which truths can be said to be eternal, in the Eternal Mind, and they are indestructible and unchangeable, like that superior intelligence.'

The system of Clarke seems to be substantially the same with that of Cudworth, as far as we can judge of

the latter from the imperfect development of it in the Immutable Morality. Clarke maintains that the law of nature consists of the relations established by nature among the individual beings composing the universe, and that human actions are right or wrong, accordingly as they conform to, or disagree with these relations. Thus the relation existing by nature between parents and children is that of love, or in other words, parents naturally love their children and children their parents. A conduct conformable to this relation is right, and one opposed to it is wrong. The ideas of the relations which constitute the law of nature, existed eternally in the Divine Mind. God, for example, foreknew from eternity that the relation of love would naturally exist between parents and children, whenever the human race should be created. There is therefore an original and eternal *fitness* in a conduct confirmable to this relation. This fitness creates an *obligation* independent of the will of God, or of the effect of the action upon the welfare either of the agent or of the public. Reason acknowledges the obligation, and decides that there is the same absurdity in an action which contradicts this natural *fitness of things*, as there is in a proposition that contradicts the ordinary relations of numbers, or the evidence of the senses.

Such appears to be the general outline of the theory of Clarke; and so far as it assumes that the essential characteristic of virtue is conformity to the law of nature, we consider him as stating a true and important principle. Sir James Mackintosh takes exception to this doctrine. 'The murderer,' he observes, 'who poisons by arsenic, acts agreeably to his knowledge of the power of that substance to kill, which is a relation between two things, as much as the physician, who employs an emetic after the poison, acts upon the belief of the tendency of that remedy to preserve life, which is another relation be-

tween two things.' With submission to Sir James's authority, we must needs say, that this objection appears to us to be but little better than a quibble. The murderer takes away life; the physician preserves it. The question is, whether their acts are respectively conformable or opposed to the relation naturally existing between the agent and the person acted on. Whether they conform to or contradict other relations between other persons or things, such as that between certain mineral substances and the human stomach, is entirely foreign to the purpose, or rather is a wholly absurd inquiry which admits of no answer. It might be argued with more plausibility, that the murderer, or in general any person who commits an immoral action, must act under the influence of some motive, which is of course the result of some of the natural relations in which he is placed; and that if he violates one law he obeys another. If, for example, I steal the property of my neighbor, in order to increase my own personal gratifications, I obey the law of nature, which leads me to seek my own personal gratifications; and the act, though immoral, is still conformable to a law of my nature. But the ready answer to this is, that the action, so far as it conforms to the law of nature, is not vicious. Considered merely as an attempt to increase my own personal gratification, its character is innocent. The immorality lies in doing this at the expense of the happiness of another, and the action, considered in its operation upon the happiness of this other person, — under which view alone it is immoral, — does violate the law of nature which has established among men the relation of society, and the kindly feelings that belong to it.

The main principle of Clarke, viz. — that the essential characteristic of virtue is conformity to the law of nature, seems to us, therefore, substantially correct as well as

highly important, and it is, as we conceive, not affected by the objections of Sir James Mackintosh. The other part of the theory of Clarke, viz. that the obligation to obey the law of nature results from the fact that the ideas of the relations which compose it have existed from all eternity in the mind of the Deity, seems to us to be much less plausible. We see not why we are bound to obey a law because it was foreseen by God, before such a law existed, that it would exist at a future period. The divine foreknowledge of the law of nature, — which we of course believe as a fact, — has nothing to do with the obligation we are under to obey this law. We are bound to obey the law of nature, not because the Deity foresaw, but because he established it. Every being, animate or inanimate, physical or moral, must of necessity obey the law of its nature; that is, it must exist and act in the way in which God intended that it should exist and act, and not in any other. The necessity of obeying the physical laws of nature is physical and absolute; that of obeying the moral laws of nature is simply moral. We have the physical power of violating them; but even while we are in the act of doing this, the law still retains its empire over us, and punishes us for the act we are committing, by inflicting upon us the painful feelings, that are by the will of Providence naturally connected with the violation of it. The will of God, is, therefore, the real source of moral obligation.

Sir James Mackintosh, in several passages of the work before us, denies this principle as maintained by some preceding writers, and appears to regard it as of a dangerous and even irreligious character. 'The doctrine of Ockham,' he observes, in allusion to this principle, 'which by necessary implication refuses moral attributes to the Deity, and contradicts the existence of a moral government, is practically equivalent to atheism. As all devotional

feelings have moral qualities for their sole object; as no being can inspire love or reverence otherwise than by those qualities which are naturally amiable and venerable, this doctrine would, if men were consistent, extinguish piety, or in other words, annihilate religion. Yet so astonishing are the contradictions of human nature, that this *most impious of all opinions* probably originated in a pious solicitude to magnify the sovereignty of God, and to exalt his authority even above his own goodness. Hence we may understand its adoption by John Gerson, the Oracle of the Council of Constance, and the great opponent of the spiritual monarchy of the Pope, a pious mystic, who placed religion in devout feeling.' Sir James Mackintosh elsewhere describes the same principle as a *monstrous position* and *the most pernicious of all moral heresies*. It is remarkable that he applies to an opinion which, whatever he may have supposed to be implied in it, is at least apparently respectful to religion, and which has been and is entertained by the most learned and pious men, a more severe censure than he has any where bestowed upon avowed atheism.

The feeling that prompted these remarks seems to have been excited by the injudicious manner in which some writers have attempted to illustrate the doctrine in question. Ockham, for example, as quoted by Sir James, affirms that 'if God had commanded his creatures to hate himself, the hatred of God would be the duty of man.' This no doubt is revolting enough: but the error lies in the supposition of fact, which is incoherent and absurd. The principle implied, that it is the duty of man to do the will of God, instead of being, as Sir James represents it, a monstrous position, is one of the most familiar truisms of natural and revealed religion. It is evident, in fact, that there are only two possible suppositions in regard to the economy of the universe; one, that it exists



*of necessity* as it is, which is atheism; the other, that it is the work of a Supreme Intelligent Principle. If the latter be true, — as we all believe, — then it is not less evident that the laws which regulate the movements and actions of the beings composing this universe, and which we commonly call the *law of nature*, are merely an expression of the will of God. When Sir James tells us that ‘the relations of things, though conceived by the Eternal Mind, are, if such inadequate language may be pardoned, the law of his will as well as the model of his works,’ we must be permitted to say that his language, though certainly not so intended by its illustrious author, is not merely inadequate, but irreverent and absurd; obnoxious in fact to the precise objection which he makes himself to the opposite opinion, to wit, that it is equivalent to atheism. To say that the relations of things as they now exist were a law to the will of God, is to say, in other words, that God was under the *necessity* of creating the universe in the form in which it now exists, and in no other. But if the universe exist of necessity as it is, the intervention of a Supreme Intelligent Principle as its Creator, Lawgiver, and Preserver, becomes superfluous, and in good philosophy cannot be admitted. The supposition is therefore, as we have said, equivalent to atheism.

We shall not at present enlarge upon this subject, which is of too transcendent and sacred a character to be treated cursorily in connection with other topics. The question lies at the bottom of Ethics, and though satisfactorily answered in general terms by various writers, has not yet, we think, been thoroughly examined and illustrated in a scientific way. An inquiry into it, conducted in a proper spirit and with the necessary talent and research, would tend very strongly to settle the now disputed foundations of the theory of morals.

The system of Clarke, which places the essence of

virtue in conformity to the law of nature, — supposing it to be correct, which Sir James denies, — is yet, as he justly remarks, defective and incomplete, inasmuch as it omits entirely the consideration of *feeling*. The existence of *moral sentiments* is one of the most certain and obvious facts in our constitution; and these must be explained and accounted for in every complete and consistent ethical system. The deficiency of Clarke and his followers in this respect was supplied by Shaftsbury, Butler, Hutcheson, and the subsequent writers who maintain the theory of a *moral sense*, — a term which was first introduced by Hutcheson. This theory supposes the existence of a distinct faculty, entirely independent of the understanding or the affections, by which we recognize moral distinctions. Sir James adopts this supposition under a form in some degree peculiar to himself, upon which we shall presently make some remarks. Our limits will not permit us to follow him in detail through his commentaries on all the writers alluded to. They will be found uniformly instructive and entertaining.

Of President Edwards he speaks in the following terms.

‘This remarkable man, the metaphysician of America, was formed among the Calvinists of New England, when their stern doctrine retained its rigorous authority. His power of subtile argument, perhaps unmatched, certainly unsurpassed among men, was joined, as in some of the ancient Mystics, with a character which raised his piety to fervor. He embraced their doctrine, probably without knowing it to be theirs. “True religion,” says he, “in a great measure consists in holy affections. A love of divine things, for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the spring of all holy affections.” Had he suffered this noble principle to take the right road to all its fair consequences, he would have entirely concurred with Plato, with Shaftesbury, and Malebranch, in devotion to the “first good, first perfect and first fair.”’

The passage here quoted from Edwards seems to have made a deep impression upon Sir James's mind. We remember to have heard him cite it in conversation, with the strongest expressions of approbation. It is certainly one of the most eloquent and beautiful enunciations of religious truth to be found in the language. In general the style of Edwards is uncommonly good, and when his subject affords opportunity for the display of such qualities, will be found to be in a high degree impressive and eloquent. His merit in this respect is, we incline to think, not generally appreciated at the present day in this country. We should regard it as one symptom of a favorable change in the public taste, to learn that his works were more generally read, and more highly valued than they are now.

Berkeley, the good and great Bishop of Cloyne, is a particular favorite of our author, who commences his account of him in the following terms.

'This great metaphysician was so little a moralist, that it requires the attraction of his name to excuse its introduction here. His *Theory of Vision* contains a great discovery in mental philosophy. His immaterialism is chiefly valuable as a touchstone of metaphysical sagacity; showing those to be altogether without it, who, like Johnson and Beattie, believed that his speculations were sceptical, that they implied any distrust in the senses, or that they had the smallest tendency to disturb reason or alter conduct. Ancient learning, exact science, polished society, modern literature, and the fine arts, contributed to adorn and enrich the mind of this accomplished man. All his contemporaries agreed with the satirist in ascribing

"To Berkeley every virtue under heaven."

Adverse factions and hostile wits concurred only in loving, admiring, and contributing to advance him. The severe sense of Swift endured his visions; the modest Addison endeavored to reconcile Clarke to his ambitious speculations. His character

converted the satire of Pope into fervid praise. Even the discerning, fastidious, and turbulent Atterbury said, after an interview with him, "So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman." "Lord Bathurst told me, that the members of the Scriblerus Club being met at his house at dinner, they agreed to rally Berkeley, who was also his guest, on his scheme at Bermudas. Berkeley, having listened to the many lively things they had to say, begged to be heard in his turn, and displayed his plan with such an astonishing and animating force of eloquence and enthusiasm, that they were struck dumb, and after some pause, rose all up together, with earnestness exclaiming, "Let us set out with him immediately." It was when thus beloved and celebrated that he conceived at the age of forty-five, the design of devoting his life to reclaim and convert the natives of North America; and he employed as much influence and solicitation as common men do for their most prized objects, in obtaining leave to resign his dignities and revenues, to quit his accomplished and affectionate friends, and to bury himself in what must have seemed an intellectual desert. After four years' residence at Newport in Rhode Island, he was compelled, by the refusal of Government to furnish him with funds for his College, to forego his work of heroic, or rather godlike benevolence; though not without some consoling forethought of the fortune of the country where he had sojourned.

"Westward the course of empire takes its way;  
The first four acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;  
Time's noblest offspring is its last."

Thus disappointed in his ambition of keeping a school for savage children, at a salary of a hundred pounds by the year, he was received, on his return, with open arms by the philosophical queen, at whose metaphysical parties he made one with Sherlock, who, as well as Smalridge, was his supporter, and with Hoadley, who following Clarke, was his antagonist. By her influence he was made bishop of Cloyne.

'Of the exquisite grace and beauty of his diction, no man ac-

customed to English composition can need to be informed. His works are, beyond dispute, the finest models of philosophical style since Cicero. Perhaps they surpass those of the orator, in the wonderful art by which the fullest light is thrown on the most minute and evanescent parts of the most subtle of human conceptions. Perhaps he also surpassed Cicero in the charm of simplicity, a quality eminently found in Irish writers before the end of the eighteenth century; conspicuous in the masculine severity of Swift, in the Platonic fanoy of Berkeley, in the native tenderness and elegance of Goldsmith, and not withholding its attractions from Hutcheson and Leland, writers of classical taste though of inferior power. The two Irish philosophers of the eighteenth century may be said to have co-operated in calling forth the metaphysical genius of Scotland; for though Hutcheson spread the taste, and furnished the principles, yet Berkeley undoubtedly produced the scepticism of Hume, which stimulated the instinctive school to activity, and was thought incapable of confutation, otherwise than by their doctrines.<sup>1</sup>

Butler, Hume, Adam Smith, Hartley and Paley are successively treated at considerable length, and in a very interesting way. The mere mention of their names will be sufficient to prepare the intelligent reader for the rich entertainment, which he will derive from Sir James's account of them. In his observations on the errors of Hume, Hartley and Paley, he is perhaps rather too lenient; but he shows no disposition to adopt them, and charity towards opponents is so rare a quality in controversy, that we can hardly bring ourselves to blame it even in its excess. We quote from the remarks on Abraham Tucker, the eccentric author of 'The Light of Nature Pursued by Edward Search,' the following passage.

'It has been the remarkable fortune of this writer to have been more prized by the cultivators of the same subjects, and more disregarded by the generality even of those who read books on

such matters, than perhaps any other philosopher. He had many of the qualities which might be expected in an affluent country gentleman, living in privacy undisturbed by political zeal, and with a leisure unbroken by the calls of a profession, at a time when England had not entirely renounced her old taste for metaphysical speculation. He was naturally endowed, not indeed with more than ordinary acuteness or sensibility, nor with a high degree of reach and range of mind, but with a singular capacity for careful observation and original reflection, and with a fancy perhaps unmatched in producing various and happy illustration. The most observable of his moral qualities appear to have been prudence and cheerfulness, good nature and easy temper. The influence of his situation and character is visible in his writings. Indulging his own tastes and fancies, like most English squires of his time, he became like many of them a sort of humorist. Hence much of his originality and independence; hence the boldness with which he openly employs illustrations from homely objects. He wrote to please himself more than the public. He had too little regard for readers, either to sacrifice his sincerity to them, or to curb his own prolixity, repetition and egotism, from the fear of fatiguing them. Hence he became as loose, as rambling, and as much an egotist as Montaigne; but not so agreeable so, notwithstanding a considerable resemblance of genius; because he wrote on subjects where disorder and egotism are unseasonable, and for readers whom they disturb instead of amusing. His prolixity at last increased itself, when his work became so long, that repetition in the latter parts partly arose from forgetfulness of the former; and though his freedom from slavish deference to general opinion is very commendable, it must be owned, that his want of a wholesome fear of the public renders the perusal of a work which is extremely interesting, and even amusing in most of its parts, on the whole a laborious task. He was by early education a believer in Christianity, if not by natural character religious. His calm good sense and accomodating temper led him rather to explain established doctrines in a manner agreeable to his philosophy, than to assail them. Hence he was represented as a time-server by free-thinkers, and as a heretic by the orthodox. Living in a coun-

try, where the secure tranquillity flowing from the Revolution was gradually drawing forth all mental activity towards practical pursuits and outward objects, he hastened from the rudiments of mental and moral philosophy, to those branches of it which touch the business of men. Had he recast without changing his thoughts, — had he detached those ethical observations for which he had so peculiar a vocation, from the disputes of his country and his day, — he might have thrown many of his chapters into their proper form of essays, which might have been compared, though not likened to those of Hume. But the country gentleman, philosophic as he was, had too much fondness for his own humors to engage in a course of drudgery and deference. It may, however be confidently added, on the authority of all those who have fairly made the experiment, that whoever, unfettered by a previous system, undertakes the labor necessary to discover and relish the high excellencies of this metaphysical Montaigne, will find his toil lightened as he proceeds, by a growing indulgence, if not partiality for the foibles of the humorist; and at last rewarded, in a greater degree perhaps than by any other writer on mixed and applied philosophy, by being led to commanding stations and new points of view, whence the mind of a moralist can hardly fail to catch some fresh prospects of nature and duty.'

The articles on Bentham, Stewart and Brown are the longest and most elaborate in the work. They will amply reward the closest attention. The following remarks on the style of Stewart are equally just and beautiful. They furnish the charming spectacle of one master in the art of eloquence, enlarging with nice discrimination, and at the same time with a full and hearty good will, upon the kindred excellence of another. Such criticism not only improves the taste, but warms, exalts and mends the heart.

'Probably no modern ever exceeded him in that species of eloquence, which springs from sensibility to literary beauty and moral excellence; which neither obscures science by prodigal

ornament, nor disturbs the serenity of patient attention ; but though it rather calms and soothes the feelings, yet exalts the genius, and insensibly inspires a reasonable enthusiasm for whatever is good and fair.

‘ Amidst excellencies of the highest order, his writings it must be confessed, leave some room for criticism. He took precautions against offence to the feelings of his contemporaries, more anxious and frequent than the impatient searcher for truth may deem necessary. For the sake of promoting the favorable reception of philosophy itself, he studies perhaps too visibly to avoid whatever might raise up prejudices against it. His gratitude and native modesty dictated a superabundant care in softening and excusing his dissent from those who had been his own instructors, or were the objects of general reverence. Exposed by his station, both to the assaults of political prejudice, and to the religious animosities of a country where a few sceptics attacked the slumbering zeal of a Calvinistic people, it would have been wonderful if he had not betrayed more wariness than would have been necessary or becoming in a very different position. The fullness of his literature seduced him too much into multiplied illustrations. Too many of the expedients happily used to allure the young may unnecessarily swell his volumes. Perhaps a successive publication in separate parts made him more voluminous than he would have been, if the whole had been at once before his eyes. A peculiar susceptibility and delicacy of taste produced forms of expression in themselves extremely beautiful, but of which the habitual use is not easily reconcilable with the condensation desirable in works necessarily so extensive. If, however, it must be owned that the caution incident to his temper, his feelings, his philosophy and his station, has somewhat lengthened his composition, it is not less true, that some of the same circumstances have contributed towards those peculiar beauties, which place him at the head of the most adorned writers on philosophy in our language.

‘ Few writers rise with more grace from a plain ground-work, to the passages which require greater animation or embellishment. He gives to narrative, according to the precept of Bacon,



the color of the time, by a selection of happy expressions from original writers. Among the secret arts by which he diffuses elegance over his diction, may be remarked the skill which, by deepening or brightening a shade in a secondary term, by opening partial or preparatory glimpses of a thought to be afterwards unfolded, unobservedly heightens the import of a word, and gives it a new meaning, without any offence against old use. It is in this manner that philosophical originality may be reconciled to purity and stability of speech,—that we may avoid new terms, which are the easy resource of the unskilful or the indolent, and often a characteristic mark of writers who love their language too little to feel its peculiar excellencies, or to study the art of calling forth its powers.

‘He reminds us not unfrequently of the character given by Cicero to one of his contemporaries, “who expressed refined and abstruse thought, in soft and transparent diction.” His writings are a proof that the mild sentiments have their eloquence as well as the vehement passions. It would be difficult to name works in which so much refined philosophy is joined with so fine a fancy,—so much elegant literature, with such a delicate perception of the distinguishing excellencies of great writers, and with an estimate in general so just of the services rendered to knowledge by a succession of philosophers. They are pervaded by a philosophical benevolence, which keeps up the ardor of his genius, without disturbing the serenity of his mind,—which is felt in his reverence for knowledge, in the generosity of his praise, and in the tenderness of his censure. It is still more sensible in the general tone with which he relates the successful progress of the human understanding, among many formidable enemies. Those readers are not to be envied who limit their admiration to particular parts, or to excellencies merely literary, without being warmed by the glow of that honest triumph in the advancement of knowledge, and of that assured faith in the final prevalence of truth and justice, which breathe through every page of them, and give the unity and dignity of a moral purpose to the whole of these classical works.

‘He has often quoted poetical passages, of which some throw much light on our mental operations. If he sometimes prized

the moral common-places of Thomson and the speculative fancy of Akenside more highly than the higher poetry of their betters, it was not to be wondered at that the metaphysician and the moralist should sometimes prevail over the lover of poetry. His natural sensibility was perhaps occasionally cramped by the cold criticism of an unpoetical age; and some of his remarks may be thought to indicate a more constant and exclusive regard to diction than is agreeable to the men of a generation who have been trained by tremendous events to a passion for daring inventions, and to an irregular enthusiasm, impatient of minute elegancies and refinement. Many of those beauties, which his generous criticism delighted to magnify in the works of his contemporaries, have already faded under the scorching rays of a fiercer sun.'

In the concluding section of the work, Sir James states at some length his own views on the theory of moral science, which are more concisely intimated in several preceding passages. They are summarily recapitulated by himself in the following terms. 'Whatever actions and dispositions are approved by *Conscience*, acquire the name of virtues or duties; they are pronounced to deserve commendation; and we are justly considered as under a moral *obligation* to practise the action, and cultivate the dispositions.' In other words, we possess a distinct and separate Moral Faculty called Conscience, by which we take cognizance of moral distinctions; the characteristics of virtue and vice are, that they are the objects respectively of the favorable and unfavorable decisions of this Faculty, and these decisions we are under an obligation to obey. The nature of this obligation, Sir James nowhere precisely explains. These principles are not new: nor are they, we believe, supported in the present work by any original arguments. They are substantially the same with those of Stewart, and having had occasion to state our views respecting them somewhat at length in

our examination of the Essays of that writer on the Active and Moral Powers of Man,\* we deem it unnecessary to repeat them here.

There is however, one important peculiarity in the views of Sir James Mackintosh, which it may be proper to notice. Stewart and most other writers, who adopt the theory of a Moral Sense or Faculty, consider it as a distinct and original part of our constitution, the germ of which, as of all the other principles of our nature, is born with us, and is gradually developed in the progress of our physical and intellectual culture. Mackintosh supposes, on the contrary, that Conscience or the Moral Faculty is not an original part of our constitution, but a 'secondary formation,' created at a later period of life by the effect of the Association of Ideas, out of a variety of elements existing in the mind. If we understand him rightly, the animal appetites are the only original elements of our constitution. By associating the pleasures we derive from the gratification of these with the persons about us who lend us their aid in gratifying them, we gradually acquire Social Feelings. The actions, whether our own or those of others, which tend to gratify the animal appetites and the social feelings thus formed out of them, of course give us pleasure, and are also recognized by the understanding as tending to promote the general good. These and a variety of other impressions that are made upon the mind by the observation of voluntary actions are gradually amalgamated into a new feeling, entirely distinct from any of the elements composing it, to which we give the name of *Moral Approbation*; and the mind, considered as having the capacity to exercise this new feeling in regard to voluntary actions, is said to possess a new and distinct power, which is called the Moral Faculty or Conscience. Such is a brief outline of Sir James's

\* N. A. Review. Vol. XXXI. p. 213.

theory, so far as it is peculiar to himself and as we understand his language. We owe it to the reputation and authority of so distinguished a writer, to quote the most important passages in his own words.

‘When the social affections are thus formed, they are naturally followed in every instance by the will to do whatever can promote their object. Compassion excites a voluntary determination to do whatever relieves the person pitied. The like process must occur in every case of gratitude, generosity, and affection. Nothing so uniformly follows the kind disposition as the act of will, because it is the only means by which the benevolent desire can be gratified. The result of what Brown justly calls “a finer analysis,” shows a mental contiguity of the affection to the volition to be much closer than appears on a coarser examination of this part of our nature. No wonder, then, that the strongest association, the most active power of reciprocal suggestion, should subsist between them. As all the affections are delightful, so the volitions, voluntary acts, which are the only means of their gratification, become agreeable objects of contemplation to the mind. The habitual disposition to perform them is felt in ourselves, and observed in others, with satisfaction. As these feelings become more lively, the absence of them may be viewed in ourselves as a pain, in others with an alienation capable of indefinite increase. They become entirely independent sentiments ; still, however, receiving constant supplies of nourishment from their parent affections, which, in well-balanced minds reciprocally strengthen each other ; unlike the unkind passions, which are constantly engaged in the most angry conflicts of civil war. In this state we desire to experience these *beneficent volitions*, to cultivate a disposition towards them, and to do every correspondent voluntary act. They are for their own sake the objects of desire. They thus constitute a large portion of those emotions, desires, and affections, which regard certain dispositions of the mind and determinations of the will as their sole and ultimate end. These are what are called the moral sense, the moral sentiments, or best, though most simply, by the ancient name of *Conscience* ; which has the merit in our language, of being applied to no other purpose, which peculiarly marks the strong workings of

these feelings on conduct, and which, from its solemn and sacred character, is well adapted to denote the venerable authority of the highest principle of human nature.

Nor is this all : It has already been seen that not only sympathy with the sufferer, but indignation against the wrong-doer, contributes a large and important share towards the moral feelings. We are angry at those who disappoint our wish for the happiness of others. We make the resentment of the innocent person wronged our own. Our moderate anger approves all well-apportioned punishment of the wrong-doer. We hence approve those dispositions and actions of voluntary agents which promote such suitable punishment, and disapprove those which hinder its infliction or destroy its effect ; at the head of which may be placed that excess of punishment beyond the average feelings of good men, which turns the indignation of the calm by-stander against the culprit into pity. In this state, when anger is duly moderated, — when it is proportioned to the wrong, — when it is detached from personal considerations, — when *dispositions and actions are its ultimate objects*, — it becomes a sense of justice. There is no part of morality which is so *directly* aided by a conviction of the necessity of its observance to the general interest, as justice. The connexion between them is discoverable by the most common understanding. All public deliberations profess the public welfare to be their object ; all laws propose it as their end. This calm principle of public utility serves to mediate between the sometimes repugnant feelings which arise in the punishment of criminals, by repressing undue pity on one hand, and reducing resentment to its proper level on the other. Hence the unspeakable importance of criminal laws, as a part of the moral education of mankind. Whenever they carefully conform to the moral sentiments of the age and country, — when they are withheld from approaching the limits within which the disapprobation of good men would confine punishment, they contribute in the highest degree to increase the ignominy of crimes, to make men recoil from the first suggestions of criminality, and to nourish and mature the sense of justice, which lends new vigor to the conscience with which it has been united.

‘ Other contributory streams present themselves. Qualities

which are necessary to virtue, but may be subservient to vice, may, independent of that excellence or of that defect, be in themselves admirable. Courage, energy, decision, are of this nature. In their wild state, they are often savage and destructive. When they are tamed by the society of the affections, and trained up in obedience to the moral faculty, they become virtues of the highest order, and, by their name of *magnanimity*, proclaim the general sense of mankind that they are the characteristic qualities of a great soul. They retain whatever was admirable in their unreclaimed state, together with all that they borrow from their new associate and their high ruler. Their nature, it must be owned, is prone to evil ; but this propensity does not hinder them from being rendered capable of being ministers of good, in a state where the gentler virtues require to be vigorously guarded against the attacks of daring depravity. It is thus that the strength of the well-educated elephant is sometimes employed in vanquishing the fierceness of the tiger, and sometimes used as a means of defence against the shock of his brethren of the same species. The delightful contemplation, however, of these qualities, when purely applied, becomes one of the sentiments of which the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents are the direct and final object. By this resemblance they are associated with the other moral principles, and with them contribute to form Conscience, which, as the master faculty of the soul, levies such large contributions on every province of human nature.

‘ It is important, in this point of view, to consider also the moral approbation which is undoubtedly bestowed on *those dispositions and actions of voluntary agents*, which terminate in their own satisfaction, security, and well-being. They have been called duties to ourselves, as absurdly as a regard to our own greatest happiness is called self-love. But it cannot be reasonably doubted, that intemperance, improvidence, timidity, even when considered only in relation to the individual, are not only regretted as imprudent, but blamed as morally wrong. It was excellently observed by Aristotle, that a man is not commended as *temperate*, so long as it costs him efforts of *self-denial* to persevere in the practice of temperance, but only when he

*prefers that virtue for its own sake.* He is not meek, nor brave, as long as the most vigorous self-command is necessary to bridle his anger or his fear. On the same principle, he may be judicious or prudent; but he is not benevolent, if he confers benefits with a view to his own greatest happiness. In like manner, it is ascertained by experience, that all the masters of science and of art,—that all those who have successfully pursued truth and knowledge,—love them for their own sake, without regard to the generally imaginary dower of interest, or even to the dazzling crown which fame may place on their heads. But it may still be reasonably asked, why these useful qualities are morally improved, and how they become capable of being combined with those public and disinterested sentiments, which principally constitute conscience? The answer is, because they are entirely conversant with volitions and voluntary actions, and in that respect resemble the other constituents of conscience, with which they are thereby fitted to mingle and coalesce. Like those other principles, they may be detached from what is personal and outward, and fixed on the dispositions and actions, which are the only means of promoting their ends. The sequence of these principles and acts of will become so frequent, that the association between both may be as firm as in the former cases. All those sentiments of which the final object is a state of the will, become thus intimately and inseparably blended; and of that perfect state of solution (if such words may be allowed) the result is *Conscience*,—the judge and arbiter of human conduct; which, though it does not supersede *ordinary motives* of virtuous feelings and habits, which are the ordinary motives of good actions, yet exercises a lawful authority even over them, and ought to blend with them. Whatsoever actions and dispositions are approved by conscience acquire the name of virtues or duties: they are pronounced to deserve commendation; and we are justly considered as under a moral obligation to practise the actions and cultivate the dispositions.'

With all our respect for the character and opinions of Sir James Mackintosh, we are compelled to say that we do not consider his innovations upon the theory of morals held by those of his predecessors with whom he most

nearly agrees, as improvements. We cannot but regret that, apparently from a too anxious wish to avoid the unnecessary multiplication of original principles,—he should have diminished the weight and value of his own testimony in favor of the doctrines which he seems to be most anxious to establish. He shows throughout extraordinary zeal in sustaining the reality of disinterested benevolence, and makes this principle in a manner the cardinal point in his doctrine; but when he develops his own views more systematically in the closing chapter, we find, with surprise and not without pain, that this disinterested benevolence is after all only a 'secondary formation' out of our animal appetites. He insists, it is true, that 'the pleasures derived from the gratification of a self-regarding appetite may become a part of a perfectly disinterested desire; and that the disinterested nature and absolute independence of the latter are not in the slightest degree impaired by the consideration that it is so formed.' The reader will judge how far this doctrine is in itself plausible, and how far it is sustained by the reasoning with which it is accompanied in the work. For ourselves, we must own, that we cannot regard it as satisfactory. If the mind, in its mature state, possess the quality of disinterested benevolence, which, by admission, is entirely and totally distinct from any animal appetite, why should we hesitate to admit that the germ of this feeling, as well as of the animal appetites, is an original and inherent part of our nature? Why is it more probable that there should be only one principle, or one set of principles in the mind than two, or more? It is no doubt unphilosophical to admit more causes, than are necessary to account for the phenomena that are to be explained; but it is not less unphilosophical to assign different and entirely opposite effects to the same cause, for no other purpose than to diminish the number of



original principles. We can understand, though we cannot agree with those who deny the reality of benevolence, and affirm that selfish gratification is the only possible motive of action. The doctrine which admits the reality of benevolence, and yet denies that it is an original principle of our nature, though more agreeable, is much less consistent and plausible as a theory, and, we must own, is entirely beyond our comprehension.

The same objection applies to Sir James's theory of the Moral Faculty. If we thought it necessary to admit the existence of a separate power of this kind, we should be much more disposed to regard it as an original principle, than as a secondary formation out of other elements. For ourselves, we do not, as we have stated on the occasion above alluded to, find any sufficient evidence of the existence of a separate *Moral Faculty*, whether Intellectual or Sensitive. By *Conscience* we understand the mind itself,—the God within us,—exercising jurisdiction over our actions and those of others through the medium of the understanding and of the natural affections; through the agency, in short, of all those distinct elements of our nature which Sir James supposes to be, for this particular purpose, amalgamated into a new and distinct faculty. The two theories are so far the same, as they both suppose that the mind, in making up its judgments on the moral qualities of actions, employs almost all the various faculties belonging to it. Sir James supposes that, for this purpose, all these various faculties are previously amalgamated into a new and independent power. This theory is not to us distinctly intelligible, and of course does not command our assent. We think it much more natural to suppose that the mind, or in other words, the man, in applying his different powers of thought and feeling to the consideration of voluntary actions, exercises each of these powers in turn,

as he does for all other purposes, and that when his judgment in regard to a particular action is, as may often be the case, the effect of the exercise of several different powers, the combination is seen not in the process but in the result.

With these brief commentaries, we take our leave for the present of this great and good man. The freedom with which we have dissented from his opinions will have satisfied our readers that we are not the slaves of his authority, nor the blind worshippers of his name. His talents and learning, remarkable as they certainly were, were not superior to those of many of his contemporaries, and are not the points in his character which chiefly command our admiration. We dwell upon his life and writings with peculiar satisfaction, because we recognize in him one of the rare instances in which the highest endowments of intellect, graced and set off by every advantage of education and position in the world, are also associated with correct moral principles and generous sentiments. The contemplation of such characters is delightful, and the description of them tends to elevate the standard of conduct and feeling throughout the community. It is on such characters that we would earnestly exhort the ingenuous and aspiring youth of our country to fix their eyes and fasten their affections. Let them learn from others a stricter prudence in private affairs, and a steadier industry,—the secrets of Fortune;—but let them study in Mackintosh the reverence for Religion and Virtue; the generous but well-tempered zeal for improvement and liberty; the manly independence; the wide and various learning, and the amiable manners, which rendered his great natural gifts an honor and a blessing to mankind. We feel a sincere pleasure in acknowledging, so far as our feeble powers permit, by this imperfect notice, the pleasure and improvement which

we have derived from his conversation and writings; and shall be still more gratified, if the opportunity should be afforded us of resuming the subject with fuller materials hereafter.

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The North American Review for July, 1835, contained the following note by the author of these pages, additional to this essay on Sir James Mackintosh.

### NOTE.

#### MEMORANDA OF THE CONVERSATION OF SIR J. MACKINTOSH.

THE article on the life and writings of Sir James Mackintosh, which appeared in our number for October, 1832, included in the form of a note a few memoranda of remarks made by that distinguished statesman and philosopher some years before in conversation with the writer of the article. In a recent anonymous British notice of Sir James's "Life, Writings and Speeches," prefixed to the fragment of his history of the Revolution of 1688, we find the following allusion to these memoranda.

"Some *pretended* memoranda of his conversation have been printed in an American periodical work. He is made to say, Homer is the finest ballad-writer in any language. Sir James Mackintosh, like most Scotchmen, had an imperfect education in Greek. He must however have known enough of Greek and of Homer as well as of epic poetry and of ballads, to avoid an absurdity so outrageous. The reported conversations, on the whole, would grievously let down Sir James Mackintosh. They are not those of a man whose success was unquestionable in the most fastidious and intellectual society of the British capital."

And further in a note :

"The person who thus chose to make Homer a ballad-writer had doubtless heard something of the foolish paradox that the

several books of the Homeric poems were unconnected rhapsodies, recited through the cities of Greece."

As to the genuineness of the memoranda which this writer describes as *pretended* we could produce the original manuscript sent out from England at the time when it purports to have been written, and could have it verified in the good old English form by affidavit before a justice of the peace; but this, we presume, is hardly necessary. A statement resting upon the authority of this journal does not require, we suppose, to be substantiated by evidence against the naked denial of a nameless writer, who cannot possibly have had any knowledge of the matter in question. In regard to the value of the memoranda, we have certainly no interest in overrating it, and are quite willing that they should pass for what they are worth and no more. It is of course not to be expected that a few brief remarks occupying two or three pages of this journal, would give a complete idea of Sir James's style of conversation. But as the responsibility for these observations, such as they are, rests upon him, it is but just to him to say, that at the time of their publication they attracted a good deal of attention, were copied into several of the newspapers and were incorporated entire into an article upon the life of Mackintosh, which appeared soon after in one of the best British reviews. They are certainly thus far curious that they are the only written memoranda that have yet appeared of the conversation of one who enjoyed for twenty years the reputation of one of the most brilliant talkers of the age.

We are so much accustomed to the discourteous tone in which the British writers express themselves in regard to every thing American, that we are hardly surprised at any new example of it, but we were not so well prepared for the want of familiarity with the most common points of classical learning, which is implied in these remarks of Sir James's biographer. That the poems of Homer, before they assumed their present shape, were unconnected songs, sung by wandering minstrels at private entertainments and public festivals, — that they were consequently in form as well as substance *ballads* in the strict sense of the term, — instead of being, as this writer imagines, an outrageous absurdity and a foolish paradox, is an historical fact of public

notoriety. If he had proceeded as far in his classical studies as the title of the first book of the *Iliad* he would have found it numbered as '*Ραψῳδία Α,*' — *Rhapsody the First*; and a little research into that recondite authority, the Greek Lexicon, would have informed him that the meaning of the word *rhapsody* is a 'collection of songs,' or, more literally, *songs sewed together*. The Homeric poems carry with them, therefore, internal evidence in the very name of their present divisions, of having existed previously in the shape of unconnected songs. If this writer after mastering the title of the first book, had possessed perseverance enough to sound the depths of the note upon it in Clarke's edition, Vol. 1, p. 1, he would have found a little collection of historical authorities in support of the same fact. "Homeri poëmata," says Clarke, "ex Asia in Græciam primum transvexisse Lycurgum refert Plutarchus in vitâ Lycurgi sub initio et Ælianus. L. xiii, c. 14. In Græcia diu circumferebantur, non, uti nunc habemus, in duos libros disposita, sed tanquam cantilenæ quædam disjunctæ. Τὰ Ὅμηρου ἔπη (inquit Aelianus ub. sup.) πρότερον διεσπασμένα ἦσαν ὡς παλαιοὶ διόντες ἔλεγον, "Τὴν ἐπὶ ναυσὶ Μάχην" καὶ "Δολωνίαν" τινὰ καὶ "Ἀριστείαν Ἀγαμέμνονος" καὶ "νῆων Κατάλογον" καὶ τοῦ "Παροικίαν" etc. Libellos istos primus ordine disposuit, contexuit et quasi consuit (ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ) Pisistratus, qui primus Homeri libros, confusos ante, sic disposuisse dicitur, ut nunc habemus." Cic. de Orat. L. iii, § 34. Πεισίστρατος ἔπη τὰ Ὅμηρου διεσπασμένα ἡθροίζετο. Pausanias Achaic. 7. 26."

Here are Plutarch, Ælianus, Pausanias, Cicero and Dr. Clarke concurring in what our anonymous critic is pleased to pronounce a foolish paradox.

If there were any doubt about this matter, which is a fact, as we have seen, within the knowledge of every well-read school-boy, we might refer to Dr. Bentley, the greatest Hellenist that England has ever produced, who remarks in his *Phileleutheros Lipsiensis*, p. 18, — "Homer wrote a sequel of songs and rhapsodies to be sung by himself for small earnings and good cheer at festivals and other days of merriment. The *Iliad* he made for the men and the *Odysseis* for the other sex. These loose songs were not collected together in the form of an epic poem.

till Pisistratus's time, about five hundred years after." Whether all these poems were written originally by one person is a point upon which Hellenists are a good deal divided, although the current of opinion for the last half century has strongly inclined to the negative ; but all agree in what this writer calls the *foolish paradox*, that the Homeric poems, previously to their collection into their present form by Pisistratus, had existed for centuries in that of "unconnected rhapsodies recited through the cities of Greece."

So much for the classical learning of this very courteous and candid person. We may add, that he has made a quite gratuitous display of his ignorance, as Sir James, in the remark in question, makes no allusion to any critical theory on the subject of the origin and composition of the Homeric poems. The conversation had turned upon Shakspeare, of whom Sir James had spoken in the very highest terms, specifying particularly as one of his great excellencies the union of profound and just philosophical thought with an exuberant richness of imagination. The writer of the memoranda remarked in reply to this, with a view of drawing out more fully Sir James's opinion on the subject, that perhaps the reflections which we find in Shakspeare, and which strike us with so much force, may in part derive their point from the fact, that they lie very near the surface of practical life, and may have been for the same reason more accessible to a writer not possessing the habit of philosophical investigation. In answer to this Sir James remarked : " We do not however find such reflections in Homer : " and then added the observation at which his biographer now cavils : " Homer is the finest ballad-writer in any language. The flow and fulness of his style are beautiful, but he has nothing of the deep piercing observation of Shakspeare." If this writer had not been blinded to the natural import of the language by the desire to sneer at an American publication, he would have seen, what every one else of course sees at a glance, that Sir James, as we have said, makes no allusion to any critical theory on the subject of the Homeric poems. *Ballad-writer*, as he uses the term, is synonymous with *epic or narrative poet*. He meant to say that Homer possessed the qualities required for excellence in epic or narra-

tive poetry in the highest perfection, but that he did not combine with them the power of profound, philosophical thought which belonged to Shakspeare. This is what his biographer describes as an *outrageous absurdity*. With how much justice we leave it to the reader to decide for himself.

We cannot close these remarks without expressing our regret, that the task of furnishing the biography of Mackintosh should have fallen into the hands of a person every way so ill-qualified for it as this writer, who does not even agree with Sir James in his political opinions. The work is apparently from a Tory pen, and wears in many passages an air of studied and almost malignant depreciation. We take for granted that the family and friends of the illustrious deceased will feel the propriety of erecting a more valuable literary monument to his memory, and we trust that some of those who lived in his society will be able to enrich it with copious notes of his table talk. Conversation was one of the fields in which he chiefly delighted to display his powers, and his fame will not be sustained by the written memorials of his life unless there should be some fuller record of his sayings than the scanty collection, which we had the good fortune to preserve, and which we ventured to incorporate in our humble tribute to his memory, certainly without suspecting that we should subject ourselves by so doing to the 'scoffs and sneers' of his pretended friends.

## CICERO ON GOVERNMENT.\*

[North American Review, July, 1823.]

WE could hardly have anticipated, at the commencement of our critical labors, that we should have in the course of them the satisfaction of announcing to our readers a work, before unpublished, by the great Roman Orator. Without shrinking at any time from a fearless and impartial performance of our functions, we cannot but experience, in attempting to discharge them on this occasion, something like the diffidence that would naturally be felt by a magistrate of ordinary powers, when required to sit in judgment upon the most distinguished individual in the country. We shall strive as usual to render substantial justice without fear, affection, or hope of reward; but, in consideration of the eminent dignity of the author we are now called to notice, we shall venture to relax a little from the tone of rigid but wholesome severity which we commonly find it necessary to assume; and shall make no scruple to welcome the 'man of Arpinum,'† at his reappearance before the literary tribunal

\* *M. Tullii Ciceronis de Re Publica quæ supersunt, edente Angelo Maio, Vaticanæ Bibliothecæ præfecto. Impressum Romæ; denno impressum Londini.* 1 tom. Svo. Impensis J. Mawman. 1823.

*La République de Cicéron, d'après le texte inédit, récemment découvert et commenté par Mons. Mai, Bibliothécaire du Vatican: avec une traduction Française, un discours préliminaire, et des dissertations historiques par M. Villemain, de l'Académie Française.* 2 vol. Svo Paris. Michaud 1823.

† Arpinas ignobilis. — *Juvenal.*



after a silence of three or four hundred years, with something of the favorable prejudice and eager enthusiasm, which, as regular reviewers, we reserve in general for the popular novelist and poet of the day.

The recent discovery of the long lost and much lamented treatise of Cicero on Government has excited, for a year or two past, a strong sensation in the literary world; and the publication of it was expected with no small degree of impatience. The work had been placed by the unanimous consent of antiquity at the head of the productions of its illustrious author, as well on account of the importance of the subject, as of the ability and eloquence with which it was treated. It is known that Cicero himself considered it as the best of all his writings; and he frequently alluded to it in his letters and other works with marked complacency. The singularity of the mode in which this interesting relic of former ages was discovered and brought to light, after lying *perdu* several centuries under St Austin's Commentary on the Psalms, added something to the curiosity which was felt respecting it. Finally, the political events of the last and present ages, and the popularity which has been given by them to all inquiries into the principles of government, rendered the present epoch particularly favorable for the first appearance of a celebrated work upon this subject by an ancient author. It is true that we were not wholly ignorant before of the general ideas entertained by the Greeks and Romans on the leading points of political science. Several of their best historical and political works have always been in the hands of the public. Nevertheless, it was impossible not to look with a high degree of curiosity for a treatise by one of the greatest philosophers and statesmen of all antiquity upon those momentous questions, which, for the last half-century, have engaged so deeply the attention of

reflecting minds, and have, in their practical discussion, convulsed the civilized world to its centre. Some persons, perhaps, may have fancied, or hoped, that the authority of this great teacher, coming, as it were like a ghost from the grave, would serve to settle all disputed points, and appease the popular commotions of the present day, as we are told in a passage of Virgil, generally supposed to allude to his famous contemporary, that the orator was accustomed, in his life time, to quiet, by his venerable presence and charming eloquence, the tumults of the Roman forum. On this head, however, we have not, for ourselves, been very sanguine. We have scripture authority for the belief, that, if men will not hear reason from their friends and contemporaries, they would not be convinced although one should rise from the dead.

The high expectations entertained of the work upon all these grounds have been, as is usual in similar cases, partly disappointed, and partly gratified. The treatise is in fact much less complete than we had been led to suppose, from the manner in which it was announced. In the notices of it, that appeared from time to time in the newspapers, it was spoken of as in substance the entire treatise, although disfigured by some breaks and blemishes. It appears, however, at present, that the discovered fragment is only about a fourth part of the whole essay; and, including all the passages preserved in other authors in the form of citations, which have been diligently collected and arranged by the present editor, we have in the whole but about a third. It is known that the treatise consisted of six books. Of these the first and second only are in any degree complete, and even in them there are large defects. Of the third, fourth, and fifth, there are only a few scanty fragments; and of the sixth, nothing. A long and very remarkable passage of the sixth book, commonly entitled *the Dream*

*of Scipio*, is, however, extant in Macrobius; and forms of itself one of the most curious and interesting relics of ancient literature. It is intended, as is well known to the classical reader, to establish, under the form of a poetical fiction, the sublime dogma of the immortality of the soul. It was probably introduced at the conclusion of the work for the purpose of adding the hopes and fears of future retribution to the other motives to virtue. But, although the preservation of this and some other extracts makes up in a degree the deficiencies of the newly discovered fragment, the public have been somewhat disappointed to find that they still possess in the whole only a third part of the promised and expected treasure. On the other hand, the fragments, that are really presented to us, are fitted by their merit to satisfy and even surpass the highest expectations that could possibly have been formed of them. They display, throughout, the rich and glowing magnificence of style always under the control of a perfect taste, that forms the manner of their author in the best of his other writings; and they contain some passages equal to any thing he ever wrote. These beautiful fragments, while they justify the high commendations bestowed by the ancients upon the entire treatise, and thus increase our regret for its loss, afford nevertheless a rich feast to the lover of eloquence. It may be added, that, as the works of Cicero are more valuable for the generous feelings and high poetical enthusiasm which constantly inspire them, than for the originality or scientific precision of the matter, they are less injured than many others would be by being read in a mutilated form. The exposition of a new scientific theory is generally unintelligible unless complete, and a fragment of a work devoted to this object would be in a manner worthless. But the writings of Cicero are not of this description. It was his habit to draw his theories in general either from

the common fund of familiar truths or from the works of the most distinguished preceding philosophers. Thus the current of his thoughts on a particular subject may be divined by reference to the principles of human nature, or to the state of opinion or learning at the time when he wrote. Every separate fragment is a chapter in the great book of universal experience commented upon by this illustrious observer. The value of the commentary lies in the power and charm of the style. It is like a fine poem of which we know the fable; and we read any detached passage with nearly the same interest and pleasure whether we possess the whole or not.

The new-found fragment of the Republic was first printed at Rome under the care of the discoverer, Mr Mai, the keeper of the Vatican library; and the text was accompanied by a dedication to His Holiness the Pope, a long preface, and a few grammatical notes by the editor. The work has been reprinted at London from this edition without alteration. As fast as the sheets were struck off at Rome they were sent to Paris; where the text has since been published with a French translation on the opposite pages, a new preliminary discourse, additional notes, and several long dissertations. The preface and notes of the Roman editor are also preserved in this edition. The new matter is by M. Villemain, one of the most distinguished scholars and academical orators in France. In the following notice of this interesting publication, we shall offer, in the first place, a concise statement, extracted from the preface of M. Mai, of the principal facts that are known respecting the composition and loss of the treatise and its late discovery. We shall then add a few remarks upon the literary and scientific merit of the work; and conclude with a notice of the additional matter supplied by the French editor.

1. The treatise on Government was begun by Cicero

during a short summer retreat from the business of the forum, which he passed at his residence near Cumæ, in the seven hundredth year of the city, the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the tenth after his consulship. This is known by a passage in a letter to his brother Quintus. 'I amuse myself pretty well,' he observes, 'in the country, excepting that I feel very sensibly the want of your society; and I shall stay till June. I have been occupied in writing the treatise on Government of which I spoke to you. It is a work of some extent and labor; but, if I succeed in it to my mind, I shall think the time employed upon it very well spent. If not, I shall throw it into the sea that is now rolling before my eyes as I write.' It is not certain at what time the work was completed. Mr Mai seems to think that it was struck off at a single heat; but this supposition is expressly contradicted by a remark of the author in another letter to his brother. 'As to the work that I began at Cumæ, and which you inquire about, I am still employed upon it, but have changed the whole plan several times.' This passage makes it certain that he had left Cumæ before the work was completed. In fact, the treatise is too considerable to have been meditated and written during a single visit to the country, which, as Cicero was then in full practice at the bar, could not well have lasted more than a few weeks. In a letter written the same year he tells his correspondent that he does not pass a day without arguing some cause. The circumstance that the plan was several times changed, proves of itself that the work was a good while in preparation. The author complains, in other letters, of want of leisure to finish it. 'I heartily wish,' he writes to Atticus, 'that I may be able to complete the work that I have undertaken. The subject, as you well know, is a very important one. To do it full justice would require much leisure, a thing of

which I am greatly in want.' It is known, however, in general, that Cicero wrote with great facility and despatch. The work upon its appearance was received by the public with general approbation. 'Your books on Government,' says a correspondent, writing to him, 'are universally approved.' *Tui politici libri omnibus vigent.* His friend Atticus, we are told by the gratified author, devoured them; as he had previously extolled to the skies the essay on oratory. The writer himself shared the common enthusiasm; and often alludes to this treatise with evident complacency. It has been remarked, however, with justice, that the encomiums bestowed by Cicero himself upon his own writings and speeches are much less open and direct than those which he continually lavishes upon his actions and character. The difference perhaps arose from an instinctive feeling that philosophy and eloquence were his strong points, and conduct his weak one. He seems to be conscious, that he stands unrivalled in Rome as a writer, and an orator; and without laboring these points, he makes it his constant effort to persuade himself and others that he is also the greatest statesman and magistrate that his country has ever produced. Among other examples of this kind may be mentioned a passage in a letter to Atticus, in which he describes himself, without much ceremony, as realizing, with some slight exceptions, the character of the perfect citizen, exhibited in one of the books of this treatise. The letter was written from his government of Cilicia, at a time when he was negotiating at Rome to obtain the honor of a triumph upon his return. He affects to treat the desire to obtain this distinction as a slight weakness, but as the only one in his character. 'Were it not,' he observes, 'for this idea of the triumph, that has been suggested to me, and which, however, you approve, I do

not know that you would need to look much farther for the perfect citizen described in the sixth book.'

The treatise on Government continued to enjoy the highest reputation as long as learning was cultivated in Rome or its provinces. It was particularly admired and frequently quoted by the most eminent of the christian fathers, especially Lactantius and Austin. The sublime passage upon the characteristics of natural law, preserved in the writings of the former, is familiar to all; and the latter is supposed to have taken from this treatise the hint of the most celebrated of his own works, entitled *the City of God*. It is justly remarked by the French editor that the soul of learning had transmigrated at this time into the body of the new religion. The christian fathers, without being precisely philosophers, were the boldest thinkers, and best writers of the time. We find them fearlessly criticising the substance of this and the other valuable treatises of the classical authors; approving what they considered good, and condemning the rest without scruple, while the pagan writers of the same period only dwelt with a barren and indiscriminating admiration upon the structure of the language. The church had not yet sunk into the gross ignorance, that disgraced it at a later period. Austin would not have converted a splendid copy of the Republic into blank parchment with a view of making it a receptacle for his own Commentary on the Psalms; but the worthy father would doubtless have been greatly delighted, if he could have anticipated that his Commentary would serve as a sort of shield to protect this solitary copy of the work he valued so much from the rage of the barbarians, and preserve it, at least in part, for better times.

In the general wreck of learning, which attended the fall of the Roman empire, the treatise on Government disappeared; and thus shared the fate of the institutions

it was principally destined to celebrate. One or two scattered copies survived a while; and a few scanty notices of it are to be found in some subsequent authors. One of the last persons, who make any precise mention of it, is the celebrated Herbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II, the most distinguished scholar of the tenth century. It is not quite certain that even he had read it; as the passage in question is an order to a monk, to whom he is writing, to procure this treatise at Rome and to bring it to him. The presumption seems to be, however, that the work was then considered as extant. John of Salisbury, who flourished in the twelfth century, quotes it; but as the same passage is also quoted by Austin, there is no certainty that John did not receive it at second hand. This vestige, uncertain as it is, is the last that remains of the existence of the Republic. Two centuries later, when the love of learning had already begun to revive in Italy, unwearied researches were made by Petrarch after the work, but to no purpose; and he finally gave up the point in despair. The smallness of the number of copies of the classical writings, that had survived the desolating period of the dark ages, is remarkably illustrated by the fact, that two valuable works, to wit, the treatise of Cicero on Glory, and that of Varro on Divine and Human Affairs, which Petrarch himself had at one time in his possession, have nevertheless perished. The copies he read were perhaps the only ones that remained; and these, it seems, were destroyed by some accident. The learned librarian of the Vatican remarks upon this occasion, with an enthusiasm better suited to his literary than to his ecclesiastical calling, that 'the man who should now recover these works, which were read by Petrarch only five hundred years ago, might well sacrifice a hecatomb to fortune.' The researches made by Poggio in the time of Leo X, as well as those of later date, were



equally fruitless. Vague rumors of the existence of the work were occasionally circulated, as in a letter to Roger Ascham, the tutor of queen Elizabeth, from a correspondent at Strasburg, who tells him that he had been promised a copy of the Republic by a person dwelling in that neighborhood, but that he had sent for it repeatedly without being able to get it. The following passage in an epistle of Caspar Barth, a German scholar of the seventeenth century, leaves room to suppose that the work was extant in that country till a very recent period. 'I now remember,' he observes, 'to have heard a fact related by John Henry Meiboom, a very credible and worthy man, which would prove, if true, that the treatise on the Republic existed very recently in Germany. He told me that there was formerly in the monastery of Rittershaus, near Brunswick, a considerable library; and that the titles of the books still remain pasted over the pigeon-holes where they were deposited. One of these titles is that of Cicero's treatise on the Republic. The library was destroyed during the thirty years' war, and some miserable soldier has deprived the world of a literary treasure that the lapse of ages will probably never restore.'

Upon the whole, the learned had lost all hope of ever recovering this treatise, when the sagacity of the present race of scholars opened the new mine of the *codices rescripti* or twice-written manuscripts. Parchment was formerly the principal material employed in writing; and, as it was naturally much more scarce and dear than paper is at present, it was not unusual, even in the time of Cicero, to save the expense of a new sheet by employing a second time one that had been written upon before, after first effacing the former inscription. In general the writings thus effaced were probably of little value; and it is not likely that any serious loss was sus-

tained by this method until the decline of learning. But it is fearful to think what ravages it must have made among the few remaining copies of the ancient classics, at a time, when, in the opinion of all competent judges of literary merit, a single homily of any barbarous saint or bishop was well worth the profane rubbish of a dozen whole Menanders. Fortunately the writing thus effaced may in many instances be read by a very careful inspection and the use of chemical agents to revive the faded color of the ink; and there is certainly room to entertain sanguine hopes of recovering in this way some of the valuable works that were thought to be lost forever. We have already had occasion to lay before the public some account of the discoveries made upon this principle by M. Mai in the Ambrosian library at Milan. The reputation, which he obtained in consequence, procured him the more distinguished station which he now occupies; and the recovery of a part of the Republic was one of the first fruits of his researches in the Vatican. It can hardly be thought unreasonable to anticipate much future success from so auspicious a commencement. The manuscript containing this fragment must have been a very splendid one, and is considered by M. Mai as of the highest antiquity, perhaps of the second or third century. We need not follow the learned editor in his very minute description of it, having already stated in general what part of the work has been recovered. It may be remarked that, if the copy had been somewhat less elegant, and the characters of a common size, the manuscript would easily have contained the whole treatise, within the same compass which is now occupied by less than a third part of it. We omit, for want of room, a great variety of curious details, contained in the editor's preface, in regard to his immediate subject, as well as some others that are touched upon incidentally; and proceed, without farther

delay, to offer a few hasty observations upon the literary and scientific merit of this celebrated treatise, as far as we can judge of it from the recovered fragment.

2. The treatise on government was written in the dialogue form; and it is stated by M. Mai that it was commonly cited by the christian fathers under the name of *the Dialogues*, although the same manner is adopted in most of the other philosophical works; a remarkable proof of the high estimation in which it was held. The principal interlocutors are Scipio Africanus and Laelius. Several other persons are also present and occasionally speak. The author intended at one time to appear himself as the principal speaker, and had been advised to do it by his friends; but finally determined to lay his scene at a period somewhat distant from the time when he wrote, and thus escape the necessity of alluding to the unhappy dissensions that had recently distracted his country. In choosing his principal speakers Cicero was extremely judicious and happy. It was necessary that the persons selected should have been distinguished both as statesmen and as scholars; in order that a philosophical discussion might appear consistent with their known characters, and that a high political reputation might give authority to their remarks on government. Scipio and Laelius united both these requisites in a remarkable degree. They were among the earliest of the Romans who added the graces of Grecian taste and learning to the manly virtues of their own ruder country. These accomplishments had refined and polished their characters, without detracting at all from their force and purity. The very name of the Scipios, the *duo fulmina belli*, was the symbol of military talent, patriotism, magnanimity, and every private virtue. Laelius was somewhat less distinguished in active life; but enjoyed on the other hand a still higher reputation for contemplative wisdom.

and was commonly styled the *Sage*. 'Such,' says Cicero very beautifully in the introduction to the treatise before us, 'was the common law of friendship between these excellent men, that when they were in actual service, Laelius adored Africanus as a god, on account of his transcendant military talents; and that Scipio, when they were at home, revered his friend, who was older than himself, as a father.' The two friends were not less remarkable for their taste and love of letters, than for other shining qualities. It is well known that they extended to the poet Terence, an African slave, the honor of their protection and intimacy; and it was the common report at Rome that they assisted this pure and sweet writer in the composition of his comedies. The poet alludes to this report himself in the prologue to the *Brothers*, and takes great pride in it, although he speaks of it as probably circulated for the purpose of injuring him.\* The uncommon and lasting attachment of Scipio and Laelius to each other throws an additional grace over the virtues of both; and their real history affords a

- \* Nam, quod isti dicunt malevoli, homines nobiles  
Eum adjuvare, assidueque unâ scribere;  
Quod illi maledictum vehemens esse existunt,  
Eam laudem hic ducit maxumam, cum illis placet,  
Qui vobis universis et populo placent;  
Quorum operâ in bello, in otio, in negotio,  
Suo quisque tempore usu' est sine superbiâ.

*Adelph. in prologo.*

It is known, from several passages in the classical writers, that Scipio and Laelius were the persons alluded to in this prologue. Suetonius quotes a speech of a certain Mummius, in which it was expressly stated that Scipio Africanus wrote the comedies which were brought out in the name of Terence. Cornelius Nepos mentions that Laelius was one day writing in his cabinet about the hour of supper, and kept his family waiting a considerable time. Upon coming out of his study he told them that he had never found himself in a better vein for composition; and then repeated some verses which are now to be found in the *Self-Tormentor* of Terence. Suetonius

finer model of friendship, than any of the fabulous examples imagined by the poets. The kindred soul of Cicero, whose friendship for Atticus is another beautiful instance of a similar kind, appears to have been deeply struck with this charming assemblage of all the noblest and loveliest qualities of our nature. He alludes frequently to Scipio and Laelius in all his writings; and has introduced them as the principal speakers in the Dialogue on Friendship, as well as in the one before us.

The dialogue on Government is represented as having occupied three days; and was distributed into six books. Every second book began with a prologue, in which the author spoke in his own person. In the prologue to the first, the beginning of which is unfortunately lost, Cicero considers the question, how far it is the duty of a wise and virtuous man to engage in political affairs. He compares, at considerable length, the happiness and utility of contemplative and active life, and decides in favor of the latter. The author is here evidently pleading his own cause; and he does it indeed with a direct reference to the events of his own life. He next introduces his fable, by supposing himself to have heard in his youth from

has preserved, in his life of Terence, the following curious epigram, which seems to show, that the friendship and patronage of these great men did not improve the worldly fortune of the ingenious African so much as might have been expected.

Dum lasciviam nobilium, et fucosas laudes peti;  
 Dum Africani vocem divinam inhiat avidis auribus;  
 Dum ad Furium se ornare et Laelium pulchrum putat;  
 Dum se amari ab hisce credit, crebro in Albanum rapi  
 Ob florem ætatis suæ, ad summam inopiam redactus est.  
 Itaque e conspectu omnium abiit in Græciam in terram ultimam.  
 Mortuus est in StympHALO, Arcadiæ oppido: nil Publius  
 Scipio profuit, nihil ei Laelius, nil Furius,  
 Tres per idem tempus qui agitabant nobiles facillime.  
 Eorum ille operâ ne domum quidem habuit conductitiam,  
 Saltem ut esset, quo referret obitum domini servulus.

Rutilius, a distinguished philosopher and a friend of Scipio, an account of a conversation on the principles of government, that was held in the gardens of Scipio by several Romans of the highest rank; and proceeds to relate the particulars of it, for the information of the friend to whom the dialogue was addressed, and whose name is lost. The groundwork being thus prepared, the dialogue commences between the principal speakers, who are passing the Latin holidays at Scipio's villa. After some preliminary discourse on the comparative importance of natural and moral philosophy, Scipio enters upon the main subject, and explains the origin of society and the value of the several modes of government. He states the respective advantages and disadvantages of the three simple forms; and prefers to either of them a system combining in some degree the distinguishing characteristics of all. This discussion occupies the remainder of the first book, which is nearly entire. The Roman Republic, being the principal example, then known, of the mixed form of government preferred by Scipio, he is naturally led to enter upon an analysis of the institutions of his own country, which occupies the greater part of the second book, and is little more than a very concise abstract of the known early history of Rome. Toward the close of the book, which is however mutilated and imperfect in this part, the conversation appears to have returned to the question of the comparative value of the different forms of government. It seems to have been maintained by Scipio that each was good in itself, but liable by abuse to degenerate into a corresponding form of tyranny; as monarchy into despotism, aristocracy into oligarchy, and democracy into anarchy. It was thus taken for granted that a just and upright administration of the government is more advantageous to a nation, than an unjust one; or, in other words, that the leading principles

of politics and morals are the same. But, as this supposition may itself be called in question, the dialogue proceeds to a discussion of it; and one of the speakers is invited by Scipio and Laelius to plead the cause of injustice, although in opposition to his own opinion. This being done, the better side of the question is afterwards argued by Laelius; and it is in this part of the dialogue, that the famous passage on natural law, preserved in Lactantius, and so often cited by modern authors, was introduced. The discussion of this point appears to have occupied almost the whole of the third book, of which unfortunately only a short fragment remains. Of the fourth and fifth, the fragments, as we have already observed, are still more scanty; and of the sixth there is nothing in the manuscript of M. Mai. As far as the contents of the fourth can be conjectured from the few passages, that are cited by former authors or have now been brought to light, the subject appears to have been a continuation, in reference to private morals, of the discussion of the value of good principles, which had been treated in the third in reference to public conduct. Of the fifth, we only know, from a passage in St Austin's *City of God*, that it began with a prologue, in which the author lamented, in his own person, the degenerate state of the political institutions of his country. The state of Rome in the time of Cicero could of course have no immediate connexion with the conversations of Laelius and Scipio. M. Villemain supposes, not without some degree of probability, that this subject was touched upon in the prologue by way of contrast; and that the main design of the book was to represent the situation of the republic at its most brilliant epoch, during which the scene of the dialogue is laid; when the manners of the people were uncorrupted and the institutions still in perfection. Of the sixth book, we only know that it con-

tained a description of the ideal character of the perfect citizen; and that it concluded with the noble passage familiarly known as *the Dream of Scipio*. Such, as far as they are now ascertained, or can be conjectured, appear to have been the general plan and disposition of the work. It is easy to perceive that there could have been very little attempt in it at strict method or scientific precision; and that the merit was principally in the elevated tone of thought and feeling that pervades the whole discussion, and in the force and beauty of the style. We take for granted, that the work will be speedily reprinted in this country. In the mean time, we trust that we shall perform an agreeable service to the classical reader by offering him one or two extracts, in the way of specimen. They will of course rather excite than satisfy his curiosity; and will thus do no injury to the speculation of the future publisher. The prologue to the first book appears to be well adapted to this purpose, as it contains of itself a complete argument on the comparative utility and happiness of political and philosophical pursuits. A part of the first section being lost, and the remainder not offering an entire train of thought, we begin our extract at the second section. We make no apology for quoting the original. The richness and majesty of the Latin language, as managed by Cicero, are quite unattainable in any of our modern dialects.

Nec uero habere uirtutem satis est, quasi artem aliquam, nisi utare. Etsi ars quidem, cum ea non utare, scientia tamen ipsa teneri potest; uirtus in usu sui tota posita est; usus autem eius est maximus ciuitatis gubernatio, et earum ipsarum rerum, quas isti in angulis personant, reapse, non oratione, perfectio. Nihil enim dicitur a philosophis, quod quidem recte honesteque dicatur, quod non ab his partum confirmatumque sit, a quibus ciuitatibus iura descripta sunt. Unde enim pietas? aut a quibus religio? unde ius aut gentium, aut hoc ipsum ciuile quod dici-



tur? unde iustitia, fides, aequitas? unde pudor, continentia, fuga turpitudinis, adpetentia laudis et honestatis? unde in laboribus et periculis fortitudo? nempe ab his, qui haec disciplinis informata, alia moribus confirmarunt, sanxerunt autem alia legibus. Quin etiam Xenocraten ferunt, nobilem in primis philosophum, cum quaereretur ex eo quid adsequerentur eius discipuli, respondisse, ut id sua sponte facerent quod cogerentur facere legibus. Ergo ille civis qui id cogit omnis imperio legumque poena, quod nix paucis persuadere oratione philosophi possunt, etiam his, qui illa disputant, ipsis est praeferendus doctoribus. Quae etenim istorum oratio tam exquisita, quae sit anteponenda bene constitutae civitati, publico iuri, et moribus? Equidem quemadmodum urbes magnas atque imperiosas, ut appellat Ennius, viculis et castellis praeferendas puto, sic eos qui his urbibus consilio atque auctoritate praesunt, his qui omnis "negotii publici expertes" sint, longe duco sapientia ipsa esse anteponendos. Et quoniam maxime rapimur ad opes augendas generis humani, studemusque nostris consiliis et laboribus tutiorem et opulentiores vitam hominum reddere, et ad hanc voluptatem ipsius naturae stimulis incitamus; teneamus eum cursum, qui semper fuit optimi cuiusque; neque ea signa audiamus, quae receptui cauant, ut eos etiam reuocent, qui iam processerint.

His rationibus tam certis tamque inlustribus opponuntur ab his, qui contra disputant, primum labores qui sint re publica defendenda sustinendi: leue sane impedimentum nigilanti et industrio; neque solum in tantis rebus, set etiam in mediocribus uel studiis uel officiis uel nero etiam negotiis contemnendum. Adiunguntur pericula uitae, turpisque ab his formido mortis fortibus uiris opponitur: quibus magis id miserum uideri solet, natura se consumi et senectute, quam sibi dari tempus, ut possint eam uitam, quae tamen esset reddenda naturae, pro patria potissimum reddere. Illo uero se loco copiosos et disertos putant, cum calamitates clarissimorum uiro- rum, iniuriasque iis ab ingratissimis impositas ciuibz colligunt. Hinc enim illa et apud Graecos exempla, Miltiadem uictorem domitoremque Persarum, nondum sanatis uulneribus iis, quae corpore aduerso in clarissima victoria accepisset, nitam ex hostium telis seruata, in ciuium

Hæc plurimis a me uerbis dicta sunt ob eam causam, quod his libris erat instituta et suscepta mihi de re publica disputatio; quæ ne frustra haberetur, dubitationem ad rem publicam adeundi in primis debui tollere. Ac tamen siqui sunt, qui philosophorum auctoritate moueantur, dent operam parumper adque audiant eos, quorum summa est auctoritas apud doctissimos homines et gloria: quos ego existimo, etiam si qui ipsi rem publicam non gesserint; tamen quoniam de re publica multa quaesierint et scripserint, functos esse aliquo rei publicæ munere. Eos uero septem, quos Graeci sapientis nominauerunt, omnis paene uideo in media re publica esse uersatos. Neque enim est ulla res, in qua propius ad deorum numen uirtus accedat humana, quam ciuitatis aut condere nouas aut conseruare iam conditas.

Quibus de rebus, quoniam nobis contigit, ut idem et in gerenda re publica aliquid essemus memoria dignum consecuti et in explicandis rationibus rerum ciuiliū quandam facultatem non modo usu sed etiam studio discendi et docendi essemus auctores; cum superiores ali fuissent in disputationibus perpoliti, quorum res gestæ nullæ inuenirentur; ali in gerendo probabiles, in disserendo rudes: neo uero nostra quaedam est instituenda noua et a nobis inuenta ratio, sed unius ætatis clarissimorum ac sapientissimorum nostræ ciuitatis uiuorum disputatio repetenda memoria est, quæ mihi tibi quondam adolescentulo est a P. Rutilio Rufo Zmyrnae cum simul essemus compluris dies exposita, in qua nihil fere quod magno opere ad rationes omnium rerum pertineret praetermissum puto.

After the characters are introduced, the conversation turns at first upon the comparative importance of natural and moral science; by the former of which seems to be chiefly intended the contemplation and study of the general system of the universe. Scipio extols, at considerable length, the interest and value of these pursuits; and, in the course of his remarks, introduces the following passage, which we think not inferior either in sublimity of thought or splendor of language to the very best pages of its author.

Quid porro aut praeclarum putet in rebus humanis qui haec deorum regna perspexerit? aut diuturnum, qui cognouerit quid sit aeternum? aut gloriosum qui uiderit quam parua sit terra, primum uniuersa, deinde ea pars eius quam homines incolant; quamque nos in exigua eius parte adfixi, plurimis ignotissimi gentibus, speremus tamen nostrum nomen uolitare et uagari latissime? Agros uero et aedificia et pecudes et inmensum argenti pondus adque auri qui bona nec putare nec appellare soleat, quod earum rerum uideatur ei leuis fructus, exiguus usus, incertus dominatus, saepe etiam teterrimorum hominum inmensa possessio. Quam est hic fortunatus putandus, cui soli uere liceat omnia non Quiritium set sapientium iure pro suis iudicare! nec ciuili nexu, sed communi lege naturae quae uetat ullam rem esse cuiusquam nisi eius qui tractare et uti sciat: qui imperia consulatusque nostros in necessariis non in expetendis rebus, muneris fungendi gratia subeundos, non praemiorum aut gloriae causa adpetendos putet: qui denique ut Africanum auum meum scribit Cato solitum esse dicere, possit idem de se praedicare, numquam se plus agere, quam nihil cum ageret; numquam minus solum esse, quam cum solus esset. Quis enim putare uere potest plus egisse Dionysium tum cum omnia moliendo eripuerit ciuibz suis libertatem, quam eius ciuem Archimedem cum istam ipsam sphaeram, nihil cum agere uideretur, de qua modo dicebatur, effecerit? Quis autem non magis solos esse qui in foro turbae quicum conloqui libeat non habeant, quam qui nullo arbitro uel secum ipsi loquantur, uel quasi doctissimorum hominum in concilio atsint, cum eorum iuuentis scribtisque se oblectent? Quis uero diuitiorem quemquam putet, quam eum cui nihil desit, quod quidem natura desideret? aut potentiorem quam illum, qui omnia quae expetat, consequatur? aut beatiorum quam qui sit omni perturbatione animi liberatus? aut firmiore fortuna, quam qui ea possideat, quae secum, ut aiunt, uel e naufragio possit eferre. Quod autem imperium, qui magistratus, quod regnum potest esse praestantius, quam despicientem omnia humana, et inferiora sapientia ducentem, nihil umquam nisi sempiternum et diuinum animo uolitare? cui persuasum sit, appellari ceteros homines esse solos eos qui essent politi propriis humanitatis artibus? Ut

mihi Platonis illud, seu quis dixit alius, perelegans esse uideatur; quem cum ex alto ignotas ad terras tempestas et in desertum litus detulisset, timentibus ceteris propter ignorationem locorum, animaduertisse dicunt in arena geometricas formas quasdam esse descriptas; quas ut uidisset, exclamauisse ut bono essent animo; uidere enim se hominum uestigia: "quae uidelicet ille non ex agri consitura, quam cernebat, sed ex doctrinae indiciis interpretabatur." Quam ob rem, Tubero, semper mihi et doctrina et eruditi homines et tua ista studia placuerunt.

It is difficult at first to recognize the character of a merely human philosophy in these lofty aspirations after a purer and more intellectual state of being; and one is almost tempted to apply to the Roman orator the supposition of the early christian fathers in regard to Plato, that he was divinely endowed by anticipation with the spirit of our religion.

These extracts will convey to the reader a better notion of the literary merit of the dialogue before us, than any critical remarks that we could offer. We shall now proceed to lay before him the few ideas that have occurred to us, in regard to the philosophical or scientific value of the theories contained in it. We have already observed that the author did not probably intend to furnish a complete system of political science; and if he did, the mutilated state of the dialogue would not permit us to judge very accurately of its value. In the part that remains, two or three of the most important subjects connected with general politics, are, however, successively touched upon; to wit, the origin of society, the comparative advantages of different forms of government and the constitution of the Roman Republic. We shall briefly notice the opinions maintained in the dialogue upon each of these topics.

On the first point the theory of the author is extremely satisfactory; and the more so, as it wears, at the present

day, an appearance of novelty, in consequence of the great temporary popularity that has lately been obtained by a different one. In the work before us, the origin of society is referred to the plain and simple cause of the social instinct, which forms one of the principles of our nature. 'A nation,' says the author, 'is a collection of individuals united by a common law and a common government. The origin of such an union is not the weakness of man in an individual state; but the social instinct of our nature. We are not formed to live separately from each other, and wherever men are found, it is in a state of society.' Such is the beginning of the passage in which the author expressed his ideas upon this subject; and of which the remainder is unfortunately lost by a break in this part of the manuscript. But though we are thus deprived of the development of the theory, we see very clearly in these few words the leading principle. The same doctrine is held by some of the most distinguished modern writers, particularly Grotius. Montesquieu, a still higher authority, lays it down in his precise and pointed way in the Persian letters. 'I never hear any body talk of public law,' he observes, 'without beginning with a painful inquiry into the origin of society. This appears to me to be quite a superfluous labor. If men did not easily enter into social union, if they naturally avoided and hated each other, the inquiry would be more reasonable. But they are all united together by birth. A son is born by the side of his father, and there he stays. This is society, and the origin of society.'

However simple and self-evident this theory may appear, it is well known that some philosophers of considerable reputation, as, for example, Hobbes, have denied the existence of a social instinct; and maintained that the natural relation between individuals is that of hostility. This opinion never obtained much popularity. Another

doctrine, somewhat less paradoxical but equally incorrect, received, about the middle of the last century, from the ingenious sophistry and enthusiastic eloquence of Rousseau, a great temporary currency; and is admitted by many even at present. In this theory men in a natural state are not considered as absolutely hostile to each other; but each individual is supposed to be wholly isolated, and disconnected from all the rest. Society is regarded as an artificial institution, formed by a special contract among these individuals, existing previously in their natural state of separation. The obligation to obey the laws and to discharge the other social duties, is made to result from the obligation we are under to perform this engagement, into which we have entered, or our ancestors for us. Such is the famous system of the *social contract*, which attracted so strongly the public attention, when exposed by Rousseau in his celebrated treatise under that title, and has been, perhaps, the one most generally received ever since his time. Beside the radical error involved in it of considering society as an artificial state, it fails altogether in establishing the social duties on any tenable ground. I have entered into a contract to obey the laws and promote the general good, and therefore I am bound to do so. But why am I bound to perform a contract? This question is as difficult to answer as the other; and in the work of Rousseau there is no attempt at a solution of it. In fact the system in question precisely reverses in this particular the natural order of cause and effect. Instead of being under an obligation to discharge the social duties because we are bound to perform our contracts, we are under no other moral obligation to perform contracts, than because it is one of our social duties to do so; that is, one of the developments and particular forms of the general law of nature, which commands us to live in society and to pro-

mote each other's good. The theory of Rousseau, therefore, even admitting its correctness, furnishes no solution of the problem of society ; or rather tends directly to the dissolution of social institutions in all their different forms.

The error of this writer, considerable as it is, was not, however, wholly unnatural. Although the existence of society is determined by an original law of nature, the formal institutions necessary for managing the common interests of the members of every particular society, are of course, in a great measure, arbitrary. They must, therefore, be settled by mutual agreement ; and can have no binding force any farther than they have obtained the assent, expressed or implied, of a majority at least of the persons upon whom they operate. These institutions, taken together, make up the constitution or government of a country ; and hence every lawful government is founded in reality on a social contract express or implied. The error of Rousseau lies in mistaking the form of society for the substance ; and regarding the social union itself as founded in convention, because the special rules which are necessary for transacting the common affairs of such an union can have in justice no other origin.

Of these forms of government, established in different states, no two are precisely similar ; but they have generally been distributed by political writers, conformably to certain leading characteristics, under the three principal heads of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. This mode of classification was adopted by the ancients ; and has been maintained and refined upon by the most intelligent of the moderns. The next subject taken up in the dialogue before us, is the question of the comparative value of these different forms. The reasoning upon this topic is far from being so precise and satisfactory as that upon the former. The leading principles seem to be, that each of the simple forms is good when administered with

justice ; that each is liable by abuse to degenerate into an analogous form of tyranny or misgovernment ; and that a compound form, uniting, in some degree, the characteristics of the three, is preferable to either. Now the fact that the three simple forms are all good when well administered, and all liable to abuse, has no tendency to shew which of them is the best, or that a form compounded of all is better than either. We know that every thing good may be abused. The real questions, which are not touched upon here, would be, which of the three is least liable to abuse, and produces the best effects when well administered ; and whether a compound form produces better effects and is less liable to abuse, than the simple ones. In regard to this latter point, it seems to be taken for granted by Cicero, that, because the three forms are all liable to abuse, a compound form must of course be less so than either. Without admitting or disputing the correctness of this conclusion, it is sufficient to remark, that it does not follow from the premises ; and if true, must be proved in some other way. If a compound form of government be better than any of the simple ones, merely as compound, it must be because it is supposed to combine the advantages of all three. But for the same reason, it must also be supposed to combine their disadvantages ; and thus the argument would make out this form to be at the same time the best and worst of all. The value of this, as of the other forms of government, must be settled by an accurate examination of its theory, and practical effects ; which is not attempted in the work before us. It will, of course, not be expected that we should enter here into the discussion of so extensive a question.\*

\* Most of these disputes, respecting the comparative value of different forms of government, are entirely verbal. Nothing can be more vague than the meaning of the names of the three simple forms ; and one or two



The third principal subject, which is treated by Cicero in the dialogue before us, is the constitution of the Roman Republic. The part of his remarks now extant is, however, a mere abstract, in a very concise and even meagre form, of the early history of his country. Much of the second book, in which this inquiry is entered upon, is unfortunately lost; and the fourth, in which there is some reason to suppose that it was taken up again, has entirely perished. In a scientific point of view, the loss of this part of the work is, perhaps, more to be regretted than that of the rest. An analysis of the political institutions

accurate definitions would be found, in general, to remove entirely the subject of controversy. This result actually happened in the case of an attempt at an argument upon the respective merits of the monarchical and republican forms of government, made in France by the Abbé Sièyes and our well known countryman Thomas Paine. About the time of the adoption of the constitution of 1791, Sièyes had been accused by the aristocratic party of being no better than a republican in disguise. This was probably true, taking the term *republican* in the sense in which they understood it: but the time not being ripe for throwing off the mask, he thought it necessary to defend himself from the imputation and published a letter in the *Moniteur*, in which he not only denies the charge, but offers to enter the lists with any honest republican, and to prove to him, that the citizen enjoys more liberty in a monarchy, than he does in a republic. The author of the Rights of Man, then acting as a missionary of liberty in *partibus infidelium*, felt himself piqued by this public defiance; and wrote to Sièyes two days after, in the *Moniteur*, that, though he was just on the point of setting off for England, he would accept the challenge with pleasure, and would undertake to make good his point within the compass of fifty pages. He professes the highest respect for the talents and character of his adversary; and even avows that he is no personal enemy to kings, but sincerely wishes, on the contrary, to see them all enjoying the honorable and happy condition of private citizens. The objects of his aversion are the miseries and vices that attend the monarchical form of government; or, in one word, the *whole hell of monarchy*. In the course of his letter he remarks, by way of explaining his views, that he does not mean by a *republic* the form of government established under this name in Holland, or in Italy, or in any other single country; but that he means a representative government, founded on the basis of the rights of man, as proclaimed in the declarations of France and America. The wily Abbé, entertaining probably the same opinion at bottom, or perhaps repenting by this time of his rather imprudent

of Rome by Cicero must have conveyed much instruction upon various points, that are now uncertain; and that will never perhaps be fully explained, unless some of the other lost treatises of the ancients upon the subject shall hereafter be brought to light. The historical abstract given by Cicero, is distinguished by the same elevation of thought and majesty of style, that prevail through all his works, but throws no additional light upon the events of the period he describes. He makes no use of critical rules in selecting his facts; and acquiesces without hesitation in the current traditions of the country, as we find

offer of engaging in a public controversy, upon a point so delicate in its reference to the French politics of that day, proceeds to escape from the difficulty by a definition of terms. He begins his explanation, published a week after in the *Moniteur*, with a number of compliments to the talents and services of his adversary, and offers him the tribute of his gratitude and high esteem. He then observes, that Mr. Paine supposes him to have given a challenge, and accepts it; that he has not given a challenge, but that, nevertheless, he should be very happy to furnish so distinguished an author with an occasion of publishing some more truths; and that as a preliminary to the argument, it is only necessary to come to an understanding in regard to the terms of the question. He states that, as Mr. Paine does not mean by a *republic* the form of government existing in Holland, or in Italy, so he is far from understanding, by *monarchy*, the constitutions of Turkey or of England; that he does not propose to defend *the whole hell of monarchy*, or any other hell, but simply *monarchy*; and that, by *monarchy*, he does not understand a despotism, or even a hereditary royalty, but a government in which MONOS, *a single person*, ARCHETAI, *exercises the chief magistracy*; that this single person may be elective in a monarchy, as well as in any other form; and that the opposite of monarchy is not an elective, or a representative government, but a *polyarchy*, or a government in which POLLOI, *several persons*, exercise the chief magistracy; that the term *republic* does not indicate any particular form of government, but means a government or body politic in general; and that the question between him and Mr. Paine, precisely stated, is the following: *whether monarchy or polyarchy be the better form of a republic*. The ground of the controversy being thus narrowed, it does not appear that our countryman thought it worth his while to engage in it; and the decisive fifty pages were never written. The explanation of Siéyès, as the reader must perceive, is little better than a *jeu d'esprit*: but it serves to shew the vagueness of the terms.

them recorded in Livy and the other historians. The correctness of these traditions has been much questioned in the course of the last century; and the inquiry may be considered as one of the most curious and interesting historical problems. M. Villemain has recapitulated, in a summary way, the *pro* and *con* of this argument in a pretty long note, which we think our readers will not be displeased to see entire. It is as follows.

‘Cicero now proceeds to examine the state of Rome at the different periods of its history, beginning with the kings. This inquiry would be more interesting, perhaps, than any speculative discussion, if it presented a new view of the Roman history. But the author adheres constantly to the current traditions; and his reflections suppose the same facts that are given by Livy and the other historians. Most of these facts, especially such as relate to the earlier periods of the city, have, as is well known, been controverted by modern critics. This subject, which has lately been revived in Germany, was much discussed by our own [the French] writers of the seventeenth century. There is a dissertation by M. de Pouilly, in the sixth volume of the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions*, in which he attempts to prove that the history of Rome, for the two or three first centuries, is wholly destitute of authenticity. He states that the earliest historians, Cincius and Fabius Pictor, lived at least five hundred years after the date of the foundation of the City; and that all the ancient documents, which they might have otherwise consulted, must have perished at the burning of Rome by the Gauls. He then shows that several facts related by Livy, are manifestly copied from Greek traditions. Thus, the story of the Horatii and Curiatii, with all its marvellous and romantic circumstances, including the love of the sister of the conqueror for one of the conquered, and her assassination by her

brother, is to be found in a fragment of the *Arcadica* of Demaratus, extant in Stobæus; and is told as a part of the history of the wars of the two Arcadian cities, Tegea and Pherea. M. de Pouilly also discovers the character of Scævola in a Greek hero celebrated by Agatharcides. He then shews that the traditions of the Romans are often contradicted by foreign testimony. Thus the account given in Livy of the defeat of the Gauls by Camillus, in the midst of the ruins of Rome, is shaken by Polybius, who states, that after besieging the capitol nine months, they voluntarily retired upon hearing that their own territory had been invaded by the Venetians. From these and other facts this writer draws the conclusion that, independently of the manifestly fabulous character of a part of this history, the accounts which appear more probable are entitled in reality to very little credence. The same opinion is supported by additional proofs and observations, in the curious dissertation of Beaufort on the uncertainty of the early history of Rome.

'This theory was however contested at the time by other learned men. Sallier, also a member of the Academy of Inscriptions, answered the objections of his colleague in two able memoirs. He establishes, in these papers, the existence of documents earlier than the fifth century of Rome, which were consulted by the most ancient historians. Cicero mentions these documents in his treatise on the Orator. 'From the very foundation of Rome, he observes, down to the time of the high-priest Publius Mucius, it was the duty of the high-priest to make up every year a register of the principal events that had happened, and to inscribe it upon tablets preserved in his house, to which the public had access. This register is commonly called the *great annals*.' In another passage, Cicero, speaking of the same collections, inquires: 'Where, but in the annals, are we to look for an account of our wars and of all our political history?

Where can we find a richer storehouse of great examples and incontrovertible authorities for use in conduct and in speech?" In a third passage he also draws conclusions from these ancient documents in regard to the eloquence of the early speakers; and finally mentions them in his treatise on Law, where he avows, at the same time, that the Romans had not then any history worthy of the title, and introduces Atticus inviting him to undertake such a work. Here then we have certain proofs of an uninterrupted series of annals, written by the high-priests, giving an account of a great number of events, and including even some notice of the orations delivered before the senate and the people. Of this class probably were the ancient collections, the books of the Augurs and the hymns of the Salian priests, from which Varro had obtained the complete acquaintance with the Roman antiquities, for which he was so much admired by Cicero. To this class of documents must be added the acts of the government, such, for example, as the tables of the enumerations or *Census*, spoken of by Dionysius of Harlicarnassus, from which Varro quotes a passage in his work on the Latin language; and the ancient treaties, one of which is mentioned by Dionysius, in the following passage: "We see at the present day, in the temple of Jupiter Fidius, called by the Romans *Sancus*, the treaty made by Tarquin with the Gabians. It is written entire upon a wooden shield covered with leather." Polybius quotes at full length a commercial treaty made with the Carthaginians soon after the establishment of the republic under the consulship of Junius Brutus and Marcus Horatius; and states that the original was deposited in the archives of the Ediles, near the temple of the Capitoline Jupiter. These documents were so numerous, according to Suetonius, that when the capitol was burnt, in the time of Vespasian, there were destroyed or lost no

less than three thousand brazen tablets, inscribed with the decrees of the senate and of the people, and other public acts. This collection was renewed by Vespasian from other sources. It is well known that the laws of the twelve tables were extant in the time of Cicero; and it is even probable that some of those made in the time of the kings were also preserved, as short fragments of them are cited by Aulus Gellius and Servius. Finally, Livy alludes repeatedly to books written on linen, *libri lintei*, which can only have been the public annals of some very remote period. Here, then, we have a great variety and abundance of public documents which the early historians had at their disposal, and appear to have employed; and which must be admitted to establish to a certain extent the authenticity of their accounts. Still, however, there are very great improbabilities in some of these accounts; as, for example, in the length of time supposed to be occupied by the reigns of seven elective kings, three of whom were assassinated, and one dethroned; and who are yet said to have reigned in the whole two hundred and forty-two years, giving a mean length of nearly forty years for each reign, while, according to the calculations of Newton, the mean length of an hereditary king's reign is only about twenty. What are we to think of the public works attributed to Ancus Martius, and supposed to have been finished in the hundredth year of the City, which are yet so magnificent, that in the time of the Republic they could hardly be kept in repair, and have long since fallen to ruin? Could these have been executed by a half-civilized city still in its infancy? Cicero himself admits, that of the history of Rome under the Kings, we really know with certainty nothing but their names. We have thus endeavored to expose in a general way the leading points on both sides of the question. The conclusion from the whole would

be, that the early history of Rome is in every way so doubtful, that there is even room to doubt the propriety of doubting it.'

We confess that we cannot help thinking the learned Frenchman's conclusion more pointed than correct. If Cicero, with all the means that he possessed of obtaining the most accurate information upon the subject, still affirmed that of the whole mythological and poetical narrative entitled *the history of Rome under the kings*, there was nothing certain but the names of these magistrates, we cannot admit that it is possible at the present day to doubt the propriety of doubting the authenticity of this history. M. Villemain, or the writers from whom he borrows his opinion, have involved the question in unnecessary obscurity, by not distinguishing sufficiently the period to which it relates. From the date of the beginning of the Republic, or soon after, it is generally admitted that the history of Rome is in the main authentic, although subject to criticism in its details; and the whole mass of public documents relied upon by M. Villemain's authorities with one or two single exceptions, and these doubtful, are posterior to that date. The uncertain period is that of the kings; and there is no evidence, nor any reason to suppose, that the account we have of it was made up from any public documents whatever. The Roman history of Mr von Niebhr, the present Prussian minister at Rome, treats this subject in a very satisfactory way. A field of inquiry has lately been entered upon by the scholars of Europe, from which we may ultimately expect some new light upon this question; we mean the investigation of the affinities of languages. It has been ascertained of late that the Sanscrit or sacred language of India, the Greek and Latin languages, and the Teutonic dialects of modern Europe, are all founded on a

common basis; and that the resemblance is peculiarly remarkable between the Sanscrit and Latin forms of this widely extended tongue. This resemblance supposes of course a connexion of some kind between the nations that spoke them; and a thorough research into the ample monuments of Indian literature, may be expected to illustrate very considerably the ancient history of Italy, and perhaps of Rome. Indeed, the mere comparison of the languages can hardly fail to produce very important results of this description. This inquiry, however, is just in its outset; and must be pursued exclusively by the grammarians for a long time to come, before the historian and the philosopher will be able to turn the fruits to account.\*

3. We have extended the second division of our article to such a length that we have left ourselves but little space for the third, in which we intended to notice the labors of the French editor upon the dialogue before us.

\* The eminent German scholar, Baron A. W. von Schlegel, professor at the new university of Bonn in Prussia, seems to be the person now most deeply engaged in this inquiry. He publishes a journal, devoted exclusively to these researches, under the title of the Indian Library, *Indische Bibliothek*, of which three numbers only have yet appeared. In the last of these, published during the last year, he announces that he has in preparation a work on the affinity mentioned in the text between the eastern and western dialects of the ancient continent, which he proposes to print under the following title. *Etymologicum novum; sive Synopsis linguarum; qua exponitur parallelismus linguae Brachmanum sacrae cum lingua Graeca et Latina; cum reliquiis linguae Etruscae, Oscae, ceterarumque indigenarum veteris Italiae dialectorum; denique cum diversis populorum Teutonicorum linguis, Gothica, Saxonica, Francica, Alemannica, Scandica, Belgica.* The name of the SANSKRIT language is one of the most obvious and striking examples of its affinity with the Latin. It signifies *holy writing* and is equivalent to the Roman SANCTUM SCRIPTUM. The prepositions and other particles, which are among the essential and radical parts of languages, have a remarkable correspondence through the whole of these dialects. Take, for example, those which express originally the local position of one thing above another. *English, OVER, UP, UPPER. German, UEBER. Gothic, UFAR. Latin, SUPER. Greek, HUPER. Sanscrit, UPARI.*



To pass them over in silence would be doing injustice to one of the most elegant and promising scholars of France, and of Europe. M. Villemain, now at the age of about thirty, has been for some years a member of the French Academy, and is well known in the literary world by several published works of great merit. His style is one of the purest and most elegant models of French prose, that has been exhibited for the last half-century; and the facility, with which he writes, is not less remarkable than the accuracy and beauty of his language. He also possesses a singular talent for extemporisation; and is now delivering lectures on history to audiences of two or three thousand persons belonging to the first circles in the capital of France. His contributions to the edition of the Republic, consist, as we have stated above, of a translation of the text, a preliminary discourse, a few notes, and three dissertations of considerable length, intended to illustrate the probable subjects of the three last books. They are all beautifully written; and give proofs at the same time of a very minute and extensive acquaintance with the classic authors. The translation represents the original, as well probably as it could be represented in a dialect, less capable than almost any other of imitating the majesty and richness of the Latin. The notes are scanty and the one quoted above is the only one of much interest. The preliminary discourse and the three dissertations are the most valuable parts of the editor's labors; and without perhaps containing any wholly original views, convey to the general reader much valuable instruction clothed in the most agreeable and popular form. The discourse contains a general history and review of the dialogue. The first dissertation is an inquiry concerning the social habits of the Romans, their amusements, their modes of education, their prevailing virtues and vices, and the general course of their private life. The second is

an essay on the political institutions of the Republic, as they existed at the time when the scene of the dialogue is laid; and the third examines the curious subject of the established religion. The reader will easily imagine that these important questions are not exhausted in a few short papers, occupying, in the whole, somewhat less than two hundred pages. But two hundred pages may be made to contain more valuable matter than one would at first thought suppose, when their contents are compiled with taste and good judgment from the best sources; and few readers will peruse these dissertations without profit as well as pleasure. The second contains a number of valuable suggestions in relation to the Roman government. After all that has been written upon this subject, it is astonishing how little is really known with certainty respecting it; and how many points, which one would have expected to find matters of public notoriety, are very imperfectly understood. The constitution of the senate, for example, is far from being so accurately known as might have been anticipated from its great importance and publicity. At the risk of protracting this article to a tedious length, we shall venture to extract M. Villemain's remarks upon this head. It is curious to compare the ideas and usages of the Romans with those of the present age upon a question, which is now considered so very important and interesting as the constitution of the principal legislative body. At Rome it seems to have engaged but little attention; and through all the long disputes of the Patricians and the Plebeians, we do not find that the demand of a radical reform of the senate was ever made by either party.

'The principles,' says M. Villemain, 'upon which the senate was constituted at the different periods of the Republic, have been the subject of much discussion, but are not yet fully understood. More than a century ago,

a celebrated British statesman proposed this question to Vertot, the author of the *Revolutions of Rome*, who had wholly omitted to notice the point in his work. He wrote in answer a very ingenious dissertation, which is now printed with the *Revolutions*. Middleton treated the subject with greater ability; and Beaufort has also examined it in his *History of the Roman Government*. After all, the question is still doubtful. In the first instance, the senators were appointed by the king, according to the accounts we have of this early period; but these accounts, supposing them authentic, afford, of course, no explanation of the constitution of the senate after the change of government. Livy states, in one passage of his history, that after the expulsion of Tarquin, the consul, Brutus, completed the number of the senators to three hundred. This passage seems to intimate that the new senators were appointed by the consul; but in another passage the same historian represents the tribune Cornelius as stating, that the senators were formerly appointed by the king, but afterwards by *order of the people*. The phrase *order of the people*, may perhaps however be understood as an allusion to the source of the consular authority. If the senators had been chosen directly by the people, it seems probable that we should have had accounts of some of the elections which must, in that case, have been at times very warmly contested. The probability, therefore, is that after the expulsion of the kings, the senators were appointed by the consuls until the introduction of the magistracy of the censors in the year 310, the intervening time being about sixty years. As long as the consulate was an exclusive privilege of the Patricians, it is probable that the senators were all taken from this order; but there is no reason to suppose that the mere quality of Patrician conferred of itself the senatorial character. At this period the senators do not

appear to have held their places for life. A census or enumeration of the people was taken every five years; and at these times the consuls or military tribunes appear to have made out a list of the senators at their own discretion, omitting the former members, and appointing new ones, as they thought proper. It does not even seem that at this period it was thought dishonorable to the character of a senator to be omitted in the new list. When the office of censor was created, the appointment of the senators devolved upon these magistrates; and soon after it became dishonorable to be excluded from the list. This fact is expressly stated by the grammarian Festus. 'In ancient times,' he observes, 'it was not thought disgraceful to a senator to be excluded in the making up of the new list. The kings admitted into the public council, and removed from it, at pleasure, such persons as they thought proper; and the consuls and military tribunes generally appointed their own relations among the Patricians and afterwards among the people. But the law of the tribune Ovinus made it the duty of the censors to appoint the best men from all the classes; and after that time it became dishonorable to be excluded.

'It is therefore certain that after the introduction of the censors those magistrates had a very considerable influence in the appointment of the senators; but we have no means of ascertaining the precise character of their functions in this respect, or the restrictions under which they exercised them. The Ovinian law, cited by Festus, which probably regulated the details relating to this subject, is not extant. Livy, in speaking of the authority of the censors in this respect, employs the phrases,—*read the list of the senate*,—*make out the list of senators*. It appears, however, from different passages in the classical writers, that after this period the old senators were retained for life unless there were particular reasons

to the contrary; and that the exercise of the more important magistracies called *curule* gave the right of admission to the senate. This right required the confirmation of the censor; but when the censorship was interrupted, seems to have been exercised without. This appears by the example of Cicero himself, who took his seat in the senate by virtue of having held the office of *quæstor* at a time, when, in consequence of the civil wars of Marius and Sylla, the censorship was vacant for seventeen years. The office of *tribune* also gave admission to the senate by virtue of a law passed in the year 623. We learn from Dionysius of Halicarnassus that a certain age was necessary; but what it was is not precisely known. There was a difference at first between the Patrician and the Plebeian senators, the former having been called *fathers*, and the latter *conscript fathers*; but Cicero always employs the latter title in addressing the whole senate. A qualification of property seems also to have been required, at least in the later periods of the Republic: but it is certain that the *curule* magistracies conferred this dignity of themselves and without regard to any other condition. Thus the Patricians, as well as the Plebeians, were obliged to obtain the public favor by giving proofs of talent and virtue, before they could gain admission into the senate; and hence this body was generally composed of the ablest and best men in the Republic. It is, therefore, not difficult to account for the great talent generally displayed by the senate; nor for the remarkable steadiness and perseverance that distinguished its policy.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty that involves almost all the details relating to the constitution of the senate, it seems therefore to be clear that the members of this body, during the middle and latter periods of the Republic, were in substance chosen for life by the people, not as senators,

but as high public officers, who became, by virtue of their places, senators for life upon quitting them. The practical results of such a system are probably not materially different from those of the method of election for short terms adopted in this country. We generally find that a member of congress or of the state legislatures, though his regular term of service may perhaps be only a year, is re-elected as long as he will consent to serve, unless excluded from party motives, or for some other particular reason: and citizens, who have discharged with honor any public functions of considerable importance, are almost universally sent to the legislative bodies, if they are willing to go. We rather regret that an exception from this latter usage seems to be gradually establishing itself, in regard to the high office of president of the United States. We cannot think that it would have detracted at all from the real dignity of character of the three illustrious living statesmen, who have held this post, had they consented, upon retiring from it, to take a seat in the senate of the union; and we are sure that their presence in that august assembly would have given additional gravity to its proceedings, and rendered a real service to the country. To return to the Roman senate, we agree with M. Villemain in thinking that its constitution, so far as we are acquainted with it, was in substance good. Had the whole legislative power been vested in this body, there would have been little to object to, in this part of the political institutions of the Eternal City. But there were great and deeply seated vices in other institutions, still more important than the forms of legislation and administration, which counteracted from the first the good effect resulting from the excellence of these forms, and finally ruined the Republic.

In the last dissertation, M. Villemain examines the religious establishments, and the state of opinion upon this

interesting subject. He considers the question, whether the principal citizens, who officiated as priests and augurs, really had any faith themselves in the gross superstitions which they employed to influence the people; and supposes with an appearance of probability, that in the early periods of the Republic, a great part of them really shared in this respect the credulity of the mass. In fact, the number of individuals of the educated class, who are able to emancipate themselves from the dominant prejudices of their age and nation is exceedingly small even in highly civilized communities, and of course still smaller in ruder ones: and the superstitions of the Romans, however gross they appear to us, were not more so than those of most other heathen countries. We have certainly individual instances of persons that appear to have treated the religious ceremonies with contempt; as was the case with a general bound upon a maritime expedition, who finding that the sacred chickens would not drink, — which was thought a bad omen, — threw them into the sea, and told them with an oath, that if they did not like fresh water, they should have salt. But an act of this kind is as likely to have been the effect of a momentary pettishness, like that which induces a savage to flog his god when his prayers are not granted, as of a rational contempt for superstition. There were however, doubtless, times and cases in which the instinctive good sense of some more generous minds rose above the influence of these prevailing opinions: as the poet of the *Iliad* represents his Trojan hero as declaring, that ‘he cared not for the flight of birds, whether they took their course to the right or to the left; and that the only omen he wanted, was the consciousness of serving his country.’ It is also certain that the ceremonies were constantly employed at Rome for merely political objects. A consul or a tribune who found it convenient to adjourn a public meeting, always had a

clap of thunder at command to assist him. But with all these exceptions and qualifications, there is every reason to suppose that the whole mass of the people, high and low, in the earlier periods of the Republic, believed in the truth of their religion as firmly and as faithfully as we do in that of ours. The progress of civilization and knowledge increased the number of sceptics; but the old religion had not entirely lost its hold upon enlightened minds, even after the establishment of christianity as the creed of the country. It appears quite certain from his writings, that the emperor Julian, with all his philosophy and wit, was a sincere and even enthusiastic pagan in the plain and usual sense of the term.

However gross and material may have been the religion of the Romans, they appear to have met with better success, and indeed to have exercised more wisdom, in determining the mode of its connexion with the state, than almost any country in which a religious establishment has ever existed. The union of church and state, as understood in most of the European countries provided with religious establishments, is in reality a legal separation or divorce; the functions belonging to the two departments, being committed to different, and in some degree, independent corporations, which act of necessity upon different and commonly hostile principles. A real union of church and state could only be effected by moulding the two systems into one, and not by forming a contract between them, which is itself a tacit acknowledgment of their disunion. Religion and government, considered as establishments, are two forms, in which the same sovereign power, to wit, the nation, representing for this purpose the order of providence, declares the same laws under different sanctions. The *unity* and not the *union* of church and state is therefore the true theory of a religious establishment. All ministers of religion



should on such a system be considered as political functionaries, and all political functionaries as ministers of religion : so that the same institution might at once consecrate the state, and civilize the church. Such was in substance the state of things in the Roman Republic.

It is time however to bring this desultory article to a close. In dwelling at considerable length upon the recovered fragment before us, we have not only had it in view to make the reader acquainted with this particular work, but have gladly taken the occasion to offer our feeble tribute of applause to the writings and character of the author. We shall feel ourselves well rewarded for our labor, if any of our readers who may be led by this notice to peruse the Republic, should be induced by the profit and pleasure which this study will certainly afford them, to familiarize themselves with the splendid eloquence and sublime philosophy of the Father of his Country.

## A DIALOGUE ON GOVERNMENT.

FRANKLIN AND MONTESQUIEU.

[*North American Review*, April, 1821.]

It is well known that the fortunate inhabitants of Elysium retain, in some degree at least, the tastes and occupations that belonged to them during their lifetime. We have the authority of Virgil to this point, which is deservedly high in every thing relating to the subject. There is also but too much reason to suppose that some of these distinguished persons are subject, like the most favoured mortals in our sublunary sphere, to the disease of ennui, and are glad to resort to reading and other amusements, in order to carry on the war with vigor against the great enemy, time. It has long been suspected for these reasons, that in making provision for the comfort of the Elysians, the accommodations of books and newspapers had not been overlooked. Having accidentally discovered the local situation of this part of the universe, and had an opportunity of examining it somewhat at leisure, I am able to assure the public that this idea is perfectly correct. The book-sellers' shops, the libraries, and the reading rooms, are on a very good footing: and the new publications and journals are received with great regularity from all parts of the world. How this is effected, and whether passengers might not pass by the same conveyances that bring the Gazettes, it is not necessary to inquire, the

rather as captain Symmes has kindly undertaken this part of the investigation. The Elysians, however, are constantly informed of the progress of events in the world : and those, who during their lives were engaged in literary or scientific pursuits, find a very agreeable resource, when time hangs heavy upon their hands, in examining the new publications as they are received; and refreshing their memories in regard to the old, or in comparing their ideas upon these subjects in conversation with each other. I had an opportunity of listening to some of these conversations, and shall set down, for the amusement of the public, the heads of a dialogue between President Montesquieu and Doctor Franklin, which occurred in one of the principal reading rooms in Elysium. I was sitting one day in this place, when the venerable doctor entered. After looking about him a little while with a leisurely air, and examining the newspapers of the day, he took down from its place a volume of Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws. He appeared to look into it for the purpose of refreshing his memory, and sometimes laid it down and seemed to meditate upon what he had been reading. While this was going on, the President himself came in. The two illustrious philosophers saluted each other with a great appearance of cordiality and mutual respect; and the conversation was immediately introduced by the following remark of Doctor Franklin.

## FRANKLIN.

Mr. President, I was employed as you entered in reflecting upon the chapter in your celebrated work on law, in which you analyse the British constitution. Notwithstanding the high respect with which I am disposed to receive every thing that proceeded from your pen, I confess that I can hardly agree with you in all your remarks upon this subject.

## MONTESQUIEU.

Consider, my dear Doctor, at the time when that chapter was written, a political observer had not all the lights to guide him that are now to be found in the world: or that were at hand even during your lifetime. The great age of revolutions, which was destined to reform the science of government, had not then arrived. We were only beginning to see our way clear a little, by the twilight that was just announcing it. We had not then had the benefit of your example, my dear Doctor, and that of your countrymen, to correct our theories. Although most of my remarks on the British constitution are substantially correct, I should still qualify them considerably, and state some of them in different language, if I were to write them over again.

## FRANKLIN.

Among the points susceptible of qualification you would perhaps include the introductory remark, that it is unnecessary to theorise on the forms of government most favourable to liberty, since the problem has been resolved in practice by the British constitution. This conclusion, my dear President, seems to be a little unphilosophical. The most that could be said with propriety on the strength of one example would seem to be that liberty is compatible with this form of government. No general conclusion can be drawn with safety from a single instance. If the English are free, it may perhaps be in spite of their form of government: and this is even intimated by yourself in another passage of your works, where you observe, that the government of England is a republic masked under the forms of a monarchy. Here you mean to state that the form of this government not only does not represent the substance, but is even contrary to its character: and as the substance in your

opinion is liberty, the form is not to be regarded as the perfect personification of liberty, but only as an accident not incompatible with its existence.

2.

MONTESQUIEU.

Why, Doctor, this was rather a manner of expression and not to be taken quite in earnest. You know my taste for quaint and fantastic forms of language. I merely meant to be understood, that as the English nation furnished one of the most remarkable examples of the enjoyment of practical liberty, the forms in use there must be of great weight in illustrating the theory of the subject. I committed a more substantial error in stating as the principle of English liberty, and of the British constitution, the existence of three distinct powers in the administration, engaged by their nature in perpetual conflict. Such a state of things could not possibly be permanent; and would produce, while it lasted, nothing but disorder. In fact, it never has existed in England. The establishment of the British constitution dates from the year 1688. Since that period the three branches of government have always acted in perfect harmony, and have rarely exercised even their constitutional veto upon each other's proceedings. There is hardly an instance of a law being negatived by the king, or a bill that had passed one of the houses of parliament being thrown out by the other for political reasons. This harmony is the principal cause of the stability of the British constitution and its great excellence, as the irregular manner in which it provides for the distribution of property is its great defect. Without this harmony the constitution would not exist in tranquillity a moment; nor exist at all for any length of time. You see I am ready to acknowledge my errors where I have obtained new light. In considering a necessary discord of its principal component parts as

the essential ingredient and great excellence of the British constitution, I made a two-fold mistake ; first in supposing a state of facts directly contrary to the reality, and secondly, as was very natural, in accounting for my false facts upon false principles.

FRANKLIN.

Your candour, my dear President, in admitting these errors does you honour, and I cannot but agree with you in your present opinion. In fact, the reasoning in your work upon this subject, though acute and ingenious, was never to my mind quite satisfactory. You observe that of the three conflicting powers each by its nature checks the others and annuls their operations ; that the natural result would be inaction, or the stoppage of the political machine ; but that the machine must go on by the necessary movement of things and that therefore the parts must go on in concert. At best this reasoning is too figurative to serve any other purpose than that of illustration ; nor does it seem to be correct in substance. It would perhaps be hard to shew that things whose operations contradict each other must therefore by the necessary movement of nature go on in concert, or that there exists any necessity which would force a machine constructed of such elements to go on at all. The action of conflicting elements upon each other tends to mutual destruction ; and this would be the case here. If the elements of a government are really conflicting in their nature, it must be because they represent great and opposite interests, existing in the nation, and of which they are the organs. Will the opposition of these interests be neutralized by bringing them immediately into each other's presence, and giving them an opportunity of coming to battle ? It is obvious that a state in which there exists such a clashing of interest can never be tranquil under any form of administration ; and one

which brought the parties into immediate contact would inflame their animosities, instead of appeasing them.

MONTESQUIEU.

Since then we are agreed that the principle of the British constitution does not lie in the balance of three conflicting powers, as is commonly thought, in what do you suppose it to consist?

FRANKLIN.

It would be impossible, my dear President, to define it with more exactness and precision, than you have done yourself in the short passage I have already quoted from the earliest, and, I say it without disparagement to your later and graver productions, the best of your works. The British government is a republic, disguised under the form of a monarchy. It is the essential principle of this government that the sovereign power, which is exercised ostensibly by king, lords and commons, is possessed in reality by the third of these branches, which is the representation of the people.

MONTESQUIEU.

Do you conceive then that the king and the house of peers have no influence in the government?

FRANKLIN.

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to distinguish between their influence as the possessors of hereditary titles, and their influence as great proprietors. In the latter point of view their weight is very considerable, since their possessions are very large. In the former, whether they are regarded as an order of nobles, or an hereditary magistracy, their influence is altogether null. Considered as an order of nobles, they have no

exclusive privileges worth mentioning, either positive or negative. When viewed as an hereditary magistracy composed of the king, who must be regarded as a member of the aristocracy, and the house of peers, their influence, though ostensibly greater, is in substance equally unimportant. The personal nullity of the king has long been formally recognized in principle. To say that the king can do no wrong is as much as to say that the king can do nothing. The institution of the royal office on this footing is only a mode of regulating the appointment of the actual executive officers, called the ministers. It is a mode which certainly has its advantages, as well as its mischiefs, but upon the whole, is not perhaps the best that could be hit upon. The king, however, in his nominations is only an indirect organ of the house of commons, and has no personal voice. It is easy to see that the house of lords is a mere pageant, or at most another house of commons quite inferior in importance to the first.

But in every country effective power is attached to the possession of property. Where property is equally divided among the members of a society, political power is also equally divided, and the government is in substance democratic. Where property is very unequally divided, and a great proportion of it centers in a few hands, the political power is divided in the same way, and the government is aristocratic. In England, property is not so unequally divided as in some countries, although much more so than in others. As far as there may be said to exist a real aristocracy, it coincides to a considerable degree with the nominal one; since the hereditary nobles are among the largest proprietors in the kingdom. There are some countries, however, in which the coincidence is much more complete. The whole property of the vast empire of Russia belongs to a small



class of hereditary nobles, who also exercise the political power. Let this property be transferred to other hands, and how long do you think these emperors, barons, and boyars would retain their present influence abroad or at home? In Austria the state of circumstances is nearly the same.

It would seem therefore, Mr. President, that in attributing the establishment of hereditary ranks, titles, and magistracies to the necessity of protecting certain individuals distinguished by birth, wealth, and honours, from the jealousy of the people, you have exactly inverted the natural order of causes and effects. Wealth is the real essence of aristocracy, and itself affords security to rank and titles. It is clear, therefore, that rank and titles could not have been established for the purpose of protecting wealth.

MONTESQUIEU.

True, Doctor; the rank and titles are only the formal expression of the real state of things that constitutes aristocracy, which is the concentration of large estates in a few hands, and the connexion of political power with the possession of them. To what then do you attribute the existence of this phenomenon? Do you regard it as a voluntary institution, or as a necessary consequence of the progress of society?

FRANKLIN.

I have already observed, that property is the principal element of political power, and the one by means of which all the other elements must produce their effect. It is impossible that power can exist in any other hands than in those of the proprietors. With such a distribution of property for example, as now exists in Russia, it is not in the nature of things that the government should be other than it is. The names and titles under which

the power is exercised, though sometimes mistaken for the substantial tenure by which it is possessed, are in fact of no importance whatever. They are mere accessories, which naturally accompany the principal. With regard to the origin of aristocracy, therefore, the only question of importance is, whence arose in most countries the great inequality which we observe in the distribution of property?

This inequality is often attributed to the differences made by nature between the gifts and talents of different individuals. Of the members of society who live by manual labour, the strongest, the most active, the most industrious, and the most prudent, must in the end become the richest. The varieties of intellect are not less remarkable, and would produce still greater and still more marked varieties of condition. We must, therefore, recur to this difference of natural powers, as being the only original inequality, and, therefore, of necessity as containing the germ of all future ones. But we are not to suppose that it will, therefore, under all circumstances, and in every state of society produce the same effects that we observe in the societies now existing, or that it would lead necessarily to any unjust or oppressive institutions. Suppose, for example, a society in a state of civilization similar to that of the European nations, and in which property is pretty equally divided. Such a supposition cannot be treated as chimerical, because it is actually realised in the United States. What then in such a community will be the result of the inequalities of natural powers? An individual of superior skill in any of the departments of manual and mechanical labor will become richer than his comrades. What follows? His property is divided among his children; his skill goes to his ablest journeyman and the equality that

was broken is restored. . An individual of superior intellect acquires a commanding influence, by great achievements in civil or military life, and amasses a large estate. What follows ? At his death his estate is divided among his children ; his influence passes to his successor in talent, and the equality that was broken is restored. Hence, in order to account for the unjust, oppressive and permanent inequalities that we see in some countries on this principle of the original variety of corporal and intellectual powers, we must suppose it to operate at an early and less civilized state of society. When a horde of barbarians invade a neighbouring country, they divide the property among them, and reduce the inhabitants to slavery. This is the historical origin of the present division of property in Europe, and if we did not know it to be so in fact, it is the only one that could possibly be imagined. But this is not enough. It is the dictate of nature that all the children should share equally in the property of the father at his decease. By this process the greatest temporary inequality would be gradually mitigated and in no great length of time completely destroyed. It is necessary, therefore, in order to procure a permanent inequality, that the unjust and revolting regulation should be established, that gives the whole estate to one of the children. This regulation alone, in any state of society, if strictly enforced, would be capable in the end of creating a great and permanent inequality, because the great estates which cannot be divided may yet accumulate. If, therefore, violence and conquest are the original causes of the great inequality of fortune in modern Europe, the feudal law of primogeniture was the means of fastening it on society. Without this law, it must have long since disappeared, and with this law it would soon return were it in any way abolished.

## MONTESQUIEU.

Since this aristocratic inequality of fortune exists in England, is not there in reality the conflict of interest between different portions of society, supposed in my remarks on the British Constitution?

## FRANKLIN.

Pardon me, my dear President, the conflict you suppose is between the different branches which make up the formal administration of the government, and which, as we have seen, have always acted together in perfect harmony, being in fact only so many different representations of the same interest, and moved by the same spirit; having, like the pipes of an organ, a little variety in tone, but being essentially in harmony. If your idea of a conflict of interest were founded upon the relation between the proprietors and the labourers, the two branches ought on the contrary to represent these different classes. Supposing that there is an opposition of interest between these classes, the conflict is not between different branches of the government, but between that part of the nation represented by the government, and another part not represented by it, and having no share in it. The conflict, therefore, would be a civil war. But the truth is, that there is no such opposition of interest between the classes of proprietors and labourers. Their interest, instead of being separate, is the same, and their intercourse is a mutual interchange of good offices. The labourer sees nothing in the proprietor but a munificent benefactor, who affords him the means of life and enjoyment. The proprietor, on the other hand, sees in the labourer a useful assistant in enabling him to take advantage of his wealth and to gratify his wishes. Neither rich nor poor have the disposition to recur at every turn to the original principles of the distribution of property.

The natural conflict, therefore, is not between these classes, but between different portions of the proprietors, whose accidental interests may happen to cross and who go up to battle against each other, each attended by his own clients.

To recur then to the point from which we started, I should consider the British government, though in form a monarchy, as in substance a republic, because the effective power belongs in reality to the commons or representation of the people, and as an aristocratic republic, or one in which there is a great established inequality in the distribution of property, in distinction from democratic republics, in which property is very equally divided. Of the latter class is the government of the United States. France, though in form a monarchy, is also in substance a democratic republic. From the recency of its institutions, however, the substance has not yet obtained dominion over the form. In France the effective power belongs to the deputies, which makes it a republic, and property is very equally divided, which makes it democratic. Every thing, however, is yet in a state of revolution. The leading principles of the administration of government and of the division of property are daily called in question: and it would be idle to predict with confidence today, what will be the state of things tomorrow. I speak of things as they now exist.

· MONTESQUIEU.

What do you conceive to be in practice the principal difference between an aristocratic and a democratic republic? Or, in other words, what is the effect upon the public welfare respectively, of an equal and an unequal division of property?

· FRANKLIN.

The welfare of the individuals that compose a society consists in having within their reach the means of

enjoyment, and in being protected in the possession of them by the government. In both these particulars it is evident to me that the advantage is greatly in favour of a general equality and mediocrity of fortune, because it is by these that the means of happiness are placed within the reach of the greatest proportion of the members of a society of any given extent. An absolute equality is neither possible nor desirable: but where an artificial inequality is not introduced and supported by law; where on the contrary it is the regular operation of the law to resolve all the accumulations of wealth that result from superior talents and industry, the largest proprietors will not be removed above the necessity or above the habit of devoting their time and thoughts to useful objects, and the lower orders of society will be higher in the social scale and consequently more respectable. The happiness of both classes will be promoted. By the unequal distribution of property existing in Europe, all the members of society are placed in a false and consequently in an unpleasant position. The happiness of the rich is so far from being augmented by the vast masses of wealth, placed at their disposition, that the immediate and, on general principles, the necessary result of their situation is the want of those moral dispositions, which are essential to happiness. With them a healthy and natural development of the intellect is almost impossible. They are either abandoned to sensual excesses, or running wild after vain chimeras of greatness and glory, perhaps to the destruction of every thing within their reach. Meanwhile the existence of the mass of population is rendered more precarious and difficult in proportion to the degree of inequality. In one country they are slaves hardly superior in condition to the brutes; in another, they are reduced to starvation and despair, at every turn in the political machine.

It has been argued by some as an objection against an equal division of property, that it tends to check population, and by others that it tends to increase it to excess. As these objections contradict each other, they cannot both be true; but supposing the truth of either, it will admit a very satisfactory answer. If a general equality of fortune has a tendency to check population, it is by increasing upon the minds of the lower classes the influence of that moral restraint so much recommended by political economists. On the other hand, by a redundant population considered as an evil, can only be meant an unnatural proportion of that class of society, which is either suffering from actual want, or borders most nearly on this condition, and is exposed to be reduced to it, by the vicissitudes of nature or of politics. But this class is numerically smaller in proportion to the whole number of inhabitants where the equal distribution of property is encouraged, and in fact could hardly exist in such a state of things. The objection, therefore, so far as it has a foundation in fact, can only mean, that the tendency of such a system is to produce a general augmentation of numbers in all classes of society. It tends then, in any given extent of country, to multiply the number of thinking, and feeling, and happy beings. A strange objection this! This limited extent of country, it may be said, will be sooner saturated with inhabitants. But the same mischief results from any other wise political institution, from every measure that tends to the public welfare, from every act of private virtue. We must, therefore, encounter this inconvenience, or the government must be administered purposely on false and vicious principles.

I am inclined to think, however, that the apparently contradictory assertions here stated as objections, are both true to a certain extent, and in certain circumstances; and that, to the extent in which they are true, instead of

being objections, they are both recommendations. In a country thinly covered with inhabitants, the principle of an equal division of property among all the children would tend to increase the population; but when the number of inhabitants had arrived to such a height as not to admit advantageously the greatest possible augmentation, the same principle would tend to keep it within bounds, by increasing the influence of prudential considerations on the minds of the community. An individual with a small fortune, and the expectation of increasing it by temperance and industry, will be more thoughtful for the morrow, than one who has nothing either in possession or expectancy.

Consider now the effect upon society of the principle we are considering, in a political point of view, that is, in regard to the security with which individuals enjoy the means of happiness within their possession. Strange as it may seem, it is sometimes urged that there is more stability in an aristocratic system;—in other words, that a general equality of fortune creates a tendency to tumult among the people, and instability in the government. Let us analyse this idea. In every popular commotion, there must be one or more leaders and a mass of followers. What is required for the first character to make it in any degree important or dangerous? A great command of means in the hands of a few individuals. What for the second? A numerous class among the people, of doubtful or desperate fortunes. Into which of the systems we are considering do these elements enter in the greatest proportion? So far is the objection from being true, that the reverse is self-evident upon the slightest consideration.

These conclusions might be strengthened by the history of all the nations in which an aristocratic system has prevailed. We find in all a constant succession of internal tumults, foreign wars and public misery. It



would be wrong however to attribute all the miseries, which deform the historical records of the world, merely to these institutions. Tumult and blood-shed are the natural symptoms and fruits of barbarous times. Excessive and artificial inequality of fortune is not so much the origin of these commotions, as another product of the same causes. Hence I have rather established the superior advantages of equality of fortune, by general reasoning, than by appealing to the miseries which attended an opposite system in the ancient republics, and in the feudal states of modern Europe up to the present day. It is nevertheless true, that the internal bitterness resulting from this unjust distinction, tends more than any other cause, to perpetuate the barbarity which first gave rise to it.

MONTESQUIEU.

If then the democratic system of general equality in fortune is so decidedly preferable to the opposite, it would seem to be the duty of a wise nation, in which the latter exists, to abandon it at once and to introduce the former.

FRANKLIN.

In this respect, my dear President, as in most others, very little can be done to assist the operation of general causes or to expedite their slow and certain results. Societies, like individuals, are machines in the hands of nature, and the only sure and safe reformer is time. Where a constituted aristocracy really exists, it is natural and necessary that it should exercise the political power. The horse would as soon think of riding the man, as the Russian peasant undertake to govern his lord. Before this state of things can change, a spirit of improvement must grow up among the rich, and must shew itself in efforts to effect a gradual amelioration in the condition of the poor. Their industry must be

encouraged, and they must be allowed to have a property in the fruits of it. By this means the poorer classes will gradually acquire a degree of consistency and importance in the state. When this course of improvement has commenced, the revolution has begun, and, if favored by circumstances, will continue in a gradual and regular progress to its final consummation in a general equality of property, and consequently of political power. The attempts that may be made by individuals to hasten or impede this progress are quite as likely to counteract as to assist the views of their authors. They are generally the result of passions, and therefore probably ill-contrived: or if predicated on principles, the principle supposed is as likely to be false as true, for practical politicians are not in general remarkable for the correctness of their views on the theory of government. When the preponderance of property has passed from the aristocracy to the people, the revolution is in substance accomplished. The people have then in reality the greater share of political power. It will depend upon accident whether in the farther progress of events the form of aristocracy disappears entirely, or whether it is preserved in the state as a nominal institution, as it has been in England and France. It would seem, however, that after the substance has passed away from it, the form itself must gradually cease to be valued, and finally disappear. Any attempt that may be made,—and at the present moment such an attempt seems to be making in France,—to give the formal aristocracy, possessing an inferior portion of the property, a superior share of the power, can only end in reaction. At what period in this course of improvement representative assemblies shall be introduced,—at what period the magistrates shall cease to be hereditary,—are points of immaterial importance. The essential point is the general diffusion of property, and with it of educa-

tion, security, and happiness among all classes. The introduction of representative assemblies and of elective magistrates is an indication that such a state of things exists. These are its natural effects, because they are conformable to reason and therefore must eventually find their place in a system founded on that basis. Where the substance exists, the form will not long be wanting, and in the meantime where the substance is enjoyed, the absence of the form will not be much felt.

## MONTESQUIEU.

It seems to be one of the delicate points in a representative government to determine the mode in which the delegates of the people shall be chosen, and there is hardly any one, in regard to which there is less uniformity among the different governments organized on this system. In the United States all the citizens of legal age paying the smallest tax, and even in most of the states without this qualification, are admitted to vote in all the elections. In Spain, according to the new constitution, the right of suffrage is equally extensive. In France it is restricted to a very small number of citizens, designated according to general principles of qualification. In Great Britain it is also much restricted, but is exercised in different places on different principles, and is treated as a personal property instead of a political right. The new constitutions in Germany are arranged in part on the same principle. In Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, the representatives are elected by a direct choice. In France the same principle exists under the present law, but according to the law proposed the choice is to be made at two degrees. It is made at two degrees in the Netherlands, and at three in Spain. The qualifications of the deputies and the times for which they are chosen are equally various in different countries. Among the vast

multitude of actual or possible forms it must be not a little embarrassing for a law-giver to determine which is best in itself or best suited to the circumstances of his nation.

FRANKLIN.

If the value of a representative government, my dear President, depended upon a correct choice from among this multitude of forms, or upon the success of an artificial combination of them according to particular local and political circumstances, its utility would be extremely questionable. No hope could be entertained of arriving at any considerable degree of exactness in such calculations. The truth is, that where the representative principle is introduced, the form in which the elections are made is altogether indifferent. The result will be the same, whether they are made by a small or a large proportion of the citizens, by the rich or the poor, on the same or on various principles, at one degree, at two, or at three. The same individuals will in fact be designated by all these different methods. The number of persons to whom the confidence of the public attaches itself is not very great: and every form of election that can be indicated is only another mode of proclaiming them. What form of election, for example, would have failed to place Pitt and Fox at the head of their respective parties in parliament during the controversies of the French revolution? The formal influence given to property is unimportant. Property has not the less weight in reality for being without it in form. What matters it to the rich man whether he is by law the only voter in his county, or whether his tenants and his laborers have the same privilege? In one case he expresses his opinion by a single vote,—in the other by two or three hundred. The number of the deliberative bodies is equally unimportant with the details of their composition, al-

though a point which is regarded by some as of the first consequence. It is a very commonly received notion that the legislature must be divided into two branches, or the state will certainly go to ruin. This notion is a part of the chimerical system of mixed government. The legislative power, according to this system, must consist of two parts, in order to form with the executive the balance upon which the public safety is supposed to depend. But we have seen already that the supposed balance is chimerical in theory and impossible in practice, and that there is no appearance of it in England, which has been quoted as the most remarkable instance in which it has been carried into effect. This consequence of the necessity of a double legislature of course falls of itself; nor is it easy to discover any advantage in submitting the same propositions to the consideration of two or more deliberative bodies in succession, representing the same interests and composed of the same materials. It would seem, therefore, that where an entirely new constitution is to be organized, the plan of a single legislative body is preferable. This has been adopted in Spain, and I should consider it a real advantage, although some of the best friends of Spanish liberty, Mr. de Pradt, for example, have denounced this provision as a radical and fatal fault, and have predicted the ruin of the country as the consequence of it, unless it should be corrected in season.

## MONTESQUIEU.

In the United States, however, the constitutions both of the general government and of the individual states are, I believe, without exception, organized upon the principle of a double legislative body; and yet this was a country in which the political constitutions were entirely of new construction, and in which there was no existing aristocracy to plead the right of prescription:

and my worthy friend, Dr. Franklin, had, I believe, no inconsiderable share in the direction of the public councils.

FRANKLIN.

In the United States, the introduction of legislatures consisting of two branches was in part a homage to the existing forms of government established before the revolution, and which then had an important meaning. The assembly then represented the people of the provinces, and the council assisted the governor in exercising the authority of the mother country. Having succeeded in securing the reality of independence it was thought expedient that as little innovation as possible should be made in the forms of legislation and administration. And this was no doubt judicious. Other reasons, however, of a more questionable character had their influence in producing this effect. Many of our leading statesmen entertained the common notion that a free government can only be maintained by a perpetual intestine conflict of its constituent parts, and they thought it absolutely necessary to organize in every state the materials for such a conflict. Had the sentiments of the people authorized them to act up to the extent of their own ideas, they would perhaps have introduced an hereditary magistracy as the most suitable element to compose one of the parties to this struggle. This measure was known to be entirely repugnant to general notions, and was never proposed; although it is understood that it was honestly considered in private by some of the leading men as the most expedient course. To make, however, at least some approach to the desirable object of an organized civil war, it was concluded to institute a second popular branch, chosen in a manner somewhat different from the first, and supposed to be superior to it in dignity. Fortunately the force of circumstances has counteracted

the mischief that might have resulted from this measure. The second representation as well as the first has proved in practice to be an entirely popular body, and no appearance has been exhibited of this conflict of interests, which had it really occurred, as the authors of the plan predicted, might have been the ruin of the republic. The only inconvenience attending the double legislatures in the United States is, that they are an expensive and inconvenient manner of preventing precipitate decisions,—an object that might be effected to the same extent by any simple regulation of the manner of debating.

The senate of the United States stands on somewhat different ground. As the sovereignty of the several states has been retained for certain purposes, it seems not improper that they should have some share in legislation in this capacity, and of course on a footing of equality. Hitherto, however, no important consequence has resulted from the existence of the senate regarded in this point of view.

As to the part taken by myself in the institution of these governments, that of Pennsylvania, in the formation of which I had the principal share, was organized at first on the plan of a single representative body. The state has since yielded to a spirit of imitation and adopted a senate, in order to be in the fashion. The new states, which have since been admitted, have universally followed in this respect the example of their predecessors.

To return, however, to the British constitution;—allow me, Mr. President, to take this opportunity of asking for an explanation of a passage in your remarks upon this subject, in which you state the probable cause of its ultimate destruction. You say that as Rome, Sparta, and Carthage have fallen, England will also lose her liberties and perish; and that this will happen, when the legislative power shall become more corrupt than the executive,

If you mean to predict that the executive power may be able at some future period to make use of the legislative, to serve its corrupt views and thus deprive the people of their liberties, the state of things would seem to be exactly the reverse of what you suppose, since the executive power would be more corrupt than the legislative,—the seducer being generally regarded as more corrupt than the seduced.

MONTESQUIEU.

I did not intend in this phrase to apply the word *corrupt* to the moral character of the persons exercising these powers respectively, but to the essential principle of the powers themselves; and the remark must be taken in connexion with the theory of which it forms a part, that the healthy action of the British constitution depends upon the preservation of a steady balance between the executive and legislative powers. Now the ability of these powers to perform the functions belonging to them depends principally on the situation of the society, and not on the personal qualities of the individuals that exercise them. If by a change of circumstances the principle of the legislative power is corrupted, and it is no longer able to exercise its functions vigorously, while on the other hand the principle of the executive power has been invigorated, the supposed balance will be lost, without any regard to the moral character of the persons in office or in parliament. It has long been imagined by a great part of the British statesmen, that this was the principal danger to which the liberties of England were exposed. The cry has long been a popular one, that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. I am satisfied, however, that this supposed balance is a vain imagination, and of course that there is no danger to be apprehended of the destruction



of a thing which never existed. Since the whole effective power resides in the popular body, its relative importance cannot have been diminished; and as the other co-ordinate branches of government are distinct powers rather in form than in reality, any apparent increase in their influence is in fact only an increase in the general attributions of the government, resulting from an increased action of the society in its political capacity.

FRANKLIN. This, my dear President, appears to me the correct opinion. How can the influence of the crown have increased and be increasing, when it is now and always has been null? In this respect, therefore, the constitution requires no reform: nor is there much more consistency in the popular cry for reform in the house of commons. The composition of the house of commons is irregular, but it represents with sufficient fairness the property of the country, which is itself a pretty fair representation of all the interests affected by legislation. I have remarked before, that the forms of elections are in a great measure indifferent: and the manner in which the house is composed is well calculated to bring into it a great share of talent and instruction. The demand for reform proceeds from two descriptions of persons. With one it is merely the cry of distress for bread. With the other it means a few slight alterations in the mode of administration, which would not affect in a sensible degree the principles or the operations of the government. The principal defect of the British constitution appears to me to consist in the unjust principles upon which it provides for the distribution of property. If landed estates were placed on a level in this respect with other descriptions of property, a blow would be struck at the root of the great inequality of fortunes which would then

disappear by a gentle and gradual process ; and by the same means a steady and growing relief would be applied to the diseased state of the population, since the country would then be enabled to support a greater number of inhabitants. If in addition to this, the various laws now in force prohibiting and restraining industry and commerce in so many ways, were prudently and gradually repealed, so that a healthy and natural relation might grow up between the demand for labour and its supply, every thing would have been done, which is in the power of legislation, to restore the country to its former tranquillity and prosperity. It would be necessary after this that the expenses of the government, or the taxes paid by the people, should be in proportion to those paid by other nations, or else the capital of the country would soon be transferred to places where it could be employed to greater advantage ; and in this point lies the principal difficulty of the present situation of England. Whether we attribute the political measures of the last thirty years to mal-administration or to an unfortunate necessity, it is certain that they have left Great Britain loaded with debt, as well as covered with what is called glory. The interest at least must be paid. This is already an enormous charge on the industry of the country. As this evil is common in nearly the same extent to most of the other European nations, the effect is so far neutralized. But in addition to this, the political importance of the country must be maintained ; a little island must continue to be the arbiter of the world. Extensive fleets and armies must be kept up, expensive civil and military establishments must be supported in a thousand colonies all over the globe, which return no profit to the nation. The balance of power must be regulated in Europe at the cost of long, frequent, bloody and ruinous wars. Could not the safety of the inhabitants of the British isles from foreign inva-

sion and their happiness as far as it depends on civil institutions be secured at a cheaper rate? Of this their wise men must judge. If not, their danger results from their unfortunate situation, from the great disproportion between their necessary expenses, and the number of people that bear the burthen of them.

Meanwhile my countrymen in the west are prosecuting their march in the career of national existence, blessed with liberty in its purest form, unincumbered with debt, an unlimited territory at command, and with all the enterprise of character and extent of information necessary to enable them to improve these advantages to the greatest possible degree. May they long continue to seek no other glory than that of being the happiest and consequently the wisest of nations! Safe from foreign violence behind the mighty wall of waters, which the blessing of providence has interposed for their defence between them and Europe, may they abjure forever the fatal passion of being feared and hated through the world! May their political efforts be solely intended to secure their own rights and to establish the custom of peace!

*Tu, regere imperio populos, Romane, memento :*

*Hæc tibi erunt artes, PACISQUE IMPONERE MOREM.*





the author of 'Pamela' and 'Clarissa,' although we have lately been surprised with something of the same kind from so exemplary a character as Milton, — and which, as we understand the matter, is vicious as a reply to her ladyship's objection, since the doublemindedness of Sir Charles must, on our view of the subject, be justified, if at all, as an exception from the general rule, and not as an example of it. However this may be, it is obvious that the question of morality does not come into view in reference to a foreign production, which faithfully represents the manners of the country where it is written. The fault, if there be one in this respect, lies with the lawgivers and moralists rather than the poets of China.

Leaving this point, therefore, entirely out of the case, we may inquire with propriety, which of the two systems is preferable for the purpose of poetical machinery, and whether the plan of allowing two heroines to a hero, be equally judicious, — considering merely the effect of the novel as a work of art, — with that of confining him to one, according to the uniform and immemorial practice of the western world. It is generally admitted that the *denouement* of a story is by far the most difficult part of the fable to manage. Dryden, towards the close of his career, was reduced to such distress on this point, that he is known to have bestowed, in the bitterness of his soul, repeated imprecations on the man who invented fifth acts; and such has been of late the great demand for new novels, that the dealers in this article are evidently reduced to their wits' ends for catastrophes. Sir Walter Scott complains loudly of the straits to which he is driven, for means to disentangle his plots; and it must be owned that some of his productions do but too strongly corroborate the statement. If the Chinese system could be proved to be preferable to ours, or even positively valuable in itself, ( and a dispensation could also be obtained on the

score of morality) the generation of novel-writers would find, for a time at least, a very sensible alleviation of their present embarrassment, and would be supplied with a new and most convenient and seasonable resource for varying the tenor of their concluding chapters.

But notwithstanding our willingness to consult the accommodation of these meritorious persons, to whom we are all so much indebted for their unwearied efforts to amuse us, we cannot, in conscience, hold up to them much prospect of relief from this quarter; and we are compelled, however reluctantly, to dissent from the opinion of the able and ingenious translator of the work before us, who is evidently inclined to believe that the introduction of the system of a plurality of heroines would have the effect of a sort of discovery in the science of novel-writing, and would tend to throw a new and agreeable light over the whole field of romance; which, as he seems to suppose, is, in its present state, if not absolutely a place of skulls (which are far from being out of the question), rather too liberally watered with tears and blood; to suit the taste of the more nervous and sensitive class of readers. We owe it to the high character of M. Abel Remusat to quote his remarks upon this point, and shall afterwards suggest, with suitable deference to his superior knowledge and judgment, our reasons for entertaining a different notion.

'A union of three persons, cemented by a conformity of taste and character, constitutes,' says M. Remusat, 'in the opinion of the Chinese, the perfection of earthly happiness, a sort of ideal bliss, reserved by Heaven for peculiar favorites as a suitable reward for their talent and virtue. Looking at the subject under this point of view, their novel-writers not unfrequently arrange matters so as to secure this double felicity to their heroes at the close of the work; and a catastrophe of this kind is regarded as the most satisfactory that can be employed. Without exposing

ourselves to the danger incurred by one of the German divines, who was nearly torn to pieces by the mob of Stockholm for defending polygamy, we may venture to remark, that for the more purposes of art, this system certainly possesses very great advantages. It furnishes the novel-writer with an easy method of giving general satisfaction to all his characters, at the end of the tale, without recurring to the fatal though convenient intervention of consumption and suicide, with us the only resources, when there happens to be a heroine too many. What floods of tears would not the Chinese method have spared to the high-minded Corinna, to the interesting and poetical Clementina! From what bitter pangs would it not have relieved the irresolute Oswald, perhaps even the virtuous Grandison himself!

Notwithstanding the plausibility of these considerations and the high authority upon which they are offered, we are satisfied that they involve a material error; which lies in confounding the interest of the novel reader and writer with that of the personages of the tale, and supposing that everything, which tends directly to promote the immediate comfort and well-being of the latter, must also redound to the advantage of the former. This idea, though in our view not only false but directly the reverse of the truth, has been entertained by others as well as M. Remusat, and in particular by the committee of blue-stocking ladies, with whom Richardson was in the habit of taking counsel, as to the conduct of his plots, while he was composing his novels. It is well known that those tender souls implored him, with tears in their eyes, to reform Lovelace and permit him to marry Clarissa. It is also understood that Mrs Klopstock, a correspondent and kindred spirit of the womankind of Richardson, interceded powerfully with her gifted spouse, in favor of one of the fallen angels called Abaddon, who showed rather more symptoms of remorse than his fellow reprobates, — entreating that he might, by some means to her unknown,



be rescued from the gulf of perdition, and after a reasonable period of purgatory reinstated in Paradise. We do not now recollect how far this intercession proved effectual with the author of the 'Messiah;' but Richardson was deaf to all remonstrance, and manfully persisted in his original intention of killing Lovelace in a duel, and taking off Clarissa by the usual expedient of consumption. And in this he was no doubt highly judicious; the opposite theory, however amiable in itself and natural to the softer and more compassionate sex, being, as we have observed above, not only incorrect, but directly the reverse of the truth.

It is obvious, in fact, that the writer and reader of novels, far from having any community of interest with the personages, thrive on their distresses, derive consolation and entertainment from their perplexities, and are ruined (as such) by their ultimate success, since that finishes the novel, and with it, for the time being, the novel writer and reader. It would no doubt be a mighty pleasant thing to the parties to marry at the opening of the first scene or first chapter, instead of fighting their way through the five acts that make up a regular play, the four volumes that now constitute the just measure of a novel, the eight and twelve that were required by the sturdier appetites of our grandmothers, or the hundred which, as M. Remusat tells us, are not too much for the patient dames and spinsters of the Celestial Empire, where numbers of all kinds are in general upon a larger scale than with us. This, we say, would be mighty pleasant for the parties; but what, in that case, would become of the novel or the play, the very being of which results from its possessing the requisite number of acts and volumes? It would be highly convenient, again, to the parties, after the first obstacles are started, to exchange a few words of explanation, opportunities for which are

constantly occurring every ten or twenty pages, and which would generally set things right at once, and remove all further difficulty; but what, in this case, would become of the rest of the work? The marriage of the lovers must in general terminate the story; for though Richardson has in one case filled up an additional volume, in a very entertaining way, with an account of Lady Grandison's lying-in and the young heir's baby-linen, the instance is evidently an exception, and would not bear to be frequently repeated. Far from courting any such premature *éclaircissements*, it is clearly the duty of the lovers, as faithful servants of the author and the public, to keep out of each other's way, and even, if necessary, to take an oath (as there is reason to suppose they often do), that they will not come to an understanding, lest the piece should finish too soon. Why does not Zaire show her brother's letter at once to the Sultan, and thus satisfy his doubts and remove his jealousy? For the plain reason that, in this case, he would be obliged to marry her in the middle of the third act, instead of stabbing her at the end of the fifth. Why does Romeo arrive at the tomb of the Capulets half an hour too late, and why does not the Missionary, in Atala ring his bell five minutes earlier? Clearly, that the ladies may in each case have time to take their poison, without which there could be no proper catastrophe.

Far from having a community of interest with the characters of the tale, it is evident that the author and reader stand in the same relation towards them with that of a physician towards his patients, or the spectators in ancient Rome towards a band of fighting gladiators. The physician feels a great deal of sympathy with the sufferer whom he is attending, laments his situation, and does all he can to relieve him; but after all, if there were no disease there would be no fee for curing it, and

the physician would die instead of the patient. The assembly in a Roman amphitheatre were in the highest degree interested in the desperate struggles and dying agonies of the gladiator; but if he implored compassion, they turned their thumbs upon him at once. The danger to which he was exposed, though death to him, was to them precisely the sport they came to see; and when he sought to escape from it, they looked upon him as a malefactor who was attempting to deprive them of a legitimate source of pleasure, and punished him as such.

In like manner we sympathize deeply with the sorrows of the heroes and heroines of romance, and it is from the exercise of this sympathy that we derive the pleasure. If they were not distressed, how could we sympathize with them? Remove the cause of their trouble, and they become at once indifferent to us. The case we think is quite clear against our ingenious translator. Had Oswald married Corinna when they first met, they would have returned to Scotland, passed a very comfortable life, had a house full of children, and given very elegant entertainments in the winter at Edinburgh or in London; but would they have wandered in company over the ruins of Rome? Would the heart-broken poetess have apostrophized the moon so beautifully from the Cape of Misenum? Who does not feel that instead of wishing to facilitate their marriage, the author was at her wits' end to prevent it from taking place at the end of every chapter; and that pale little Lucilla, for whom nobody cares a straw, was introduced into the work for no other earthly purpose? If Oswald could with propriety have married both the sisters, Madame de Staël must either have invented some other mode of separating him from Corinna, or we should have lost the work.

It is obvious, therefore, that the accommodation afforded to the personages of a novel by the Chinese system of

double marriages, is ruinous (so far as it operates) both to the writer and reader; depriving the former of one of his most useful machines for creating the necessary distress, and the latter of all the pleasure, which the contemplation of the distress thus created would have afforded him. The marriage of the lovers, notwithstanding the false and sophisticated theories of this branch of literature, that obtain from time to time a temporary currency among us, is and must ever remain the only legitimate object of a true novel; and the real difficulty of composing one (as respects the plot) consists in keeping the said lovers apart by natural and probable means, for the space of four volumes. The extent of this difficulty is easily appreciated, when we recollect that the hero and heroine are both *ex officio* endowed with all the virtues and graces that can adorn human nature, at its best estate; perfect beauty heightened and set off by the most unaffectedly easy and graceful manners; unspotted integrity and honor, ready wit, universal knowledge, skill in all the useful and ornamental arts, every personal quality in short, which is fitted to engage attention, admiration, and love, with perhaps a few grains of imperfection thrown in, just to show that the being in question is not absolutely an angel in disguise. On the other hand, the subordinate characters, composing the circle in which the hero and heroine move, are, for the purpose of contrast, degraded as much below the ordinary standard, as the others are elevated above it; and are all either absolute reprobates without a trace of any redeeming virtue, or if in the main respectable, are encumbered with some defect, physical or moral, that necessarily fixes upon them the dislike, contempt or pity of the reader. If honest, they are awkward, stupid, and ignorant; if tolerably handsome, polite and accomplished,

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they are either arrant knaves, or else too old to be dangerous.

The lovers, in short, are the only persons who enjoy the privilege of combining youth and other accidental advantages, with a high degree of intelligence and moral excellence; and they figure in the troop that surrounds them, like the *stars* from some metropolitan theatre on a provincial stage. 'So stately his form and so lovely her face,' that, from their first introduction, we see that they have a mutual attraction as strong as that of the needle to the pole, and that nothing but violent means can prevent them from rushing into each other's arms at the end of the first act or chapter. These violent means must of course be resorted to by the writer, and it is upon the judicious selection and employment of them, through the five acts or the four volumes, that the merit of the plot depends. Of these there is no doubt a considerable variety;—inequality of birth or fortune; family feuds; dissensions on religion and politics among the old people; the intervention of agents either wholly or partly supernatural; finally, mere accidents, as when Oroonates is prevented from marrying Statira, because Statira makes a false step as she is getting out of the carriage at the church door, falls upon the pavement, and breaks her neck. All these resources (except perhaps the last, which however is but too often employed by the ablest hands) have their value, and are used by turns with effect and success; but all of them put together are not perhaps worth the single expedient of a rival passion.

All other difficulties are partly in the nature of accidents, and subject, though in a less degree, to the same objection. That Zaïre, after getting on her wedding dress, should discover, to her great surprise and regret, that she is a Christian, while her intended husband, the Sultan, is a good Mussulman, is not much better, as a piece

of poetical machinery, than the untimely slip of the foot, that proved fatal to the happiness of Statira, as mentioned above. Cases of this description are like those actions at law that go off upon some defect in special pleading; but when a rival passion is brought into play, it is then, and then only, that the question may be said to be fairly argued on its merits. Once secure of the affections of his mistress, the hero, even though prevented by some objection of a positive kind from marrying her immediately, pursues his way with comparative equanimity from volume to volume, in the well-founded conviction that his author will set all right in the end. The difficulty is in reality in a great measure foreign to him, since all disputes about politics, religion, property, birth, and other such matters, must after all be adjusted by the parents and guardians. The lovers sink of course into subordinate characters, and the book becomes a treatise on moral philosophy, or the history of this or that period,—anything in short but a novel.

But let the hero once entertain a doubt of his mistress's affection, and it is easy to see that the stage must be as it were, all on fire until he is satisfied. Then first develops itself the terrible element of jealousy with its heart-rending agonies, so intolerable to the sufferer and so diverting to the reader; then are heard the keen encounter of wits, the contemptuous and angry defiance, the fond expostulation, the melting avowal; then, as Prince Meternich says of the course of contemporary political affairs, the action 'plunges furiously forward like a ship in a hurricane.' Bursts of passion, floods of tears, madness, duelling, all the most violent expedients that can be used, are now legitimate, and are brought home to the persons of the main actors, who thus become the real heroes of their own adventures (instead of being, as they are in many very popular modern romances, a couple of

insignificant painted waxen puppets), until the triumph of one pretender and the just despair of the other terminate the strange eventful history.

Now, the moment we admit with the Chinese the system of double marriages, this rich stock of materials for romance is irretrievably lost. If Oswald could, consistently with the law of the land and of romance, have married both Corinna and Lucilla, the work, as we said before, could not have been written, at least in its present form. Had it been regular for Grandison to espouse at once Clementina and Miss Byron, can it be supposed for a moment that either of these paragons, who appear to have had the highest respect for each other, would have objected to the arrangement? Where then had been the volumes of high wrought sentiment and eloquent insanity, over which we now hang with such intense rapture? All exchanged for a paragraph in the newspaper, and a record in the parish register. If Charlotte, again, could with propriety have shared her affections impartially between the youthful Werther and his aged rival (and we see not why the ladies should not have as large privileges in this respect as the gentlemen, although we are not aware whether they are or are not allowed them by the customs of China), would that passionate enthusiast have thought of demanding the loan of the pistols? Would not the fair hand, that conveyed this fatal present, have probably been employed, at no very distant period, in spreading bread and butter for other children as well as those of Albert and his former wife? Where then had been the charming 'Sorrows,' and the 'tears eternal,' that will embalm the memory of poor Jerusalem, who sat for the portrait?

We are satisfied, in short, that the Chinese system (whatever may be its value in practice,—a point upon which there can of course among us be but one opinion.)

would be decidedly injurious in its effects on polite literature, and that the amiable feelings of our ingenious translator have led him into a very grave and obvious error upon this subject. We think that we can perceive a certain tameness resulting from this very circumstance, in the conduct of the action represented in the novel before us, to which we must now more particularly direct our attention, having already been led by the attractive nature of the inquiry to digress somewhat farther than we originally intended.

It has long been known, by the accounts of the missionaries who visited China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that the literature of that empire was extremely rich, especially in the departments of poetry and romance; but the nature of the objects, which more immediately occupied the attention of these travellers, prevented them from making very deep researches into this particular subject. Their sudden and violent expulsion, and the subsequent rigorous prohibition of all intercourse with Europe, have made it impossible to prosecute these inquiries on the spot; but the missionaries had fortunately sent home, during their residence, extensive collections of the best works in all branches of learning. Of these, not less than five or six thousand, some of them very voluminous, are preserved in the Royal Library at Paris, and have furnished M. Remusat, undoubtedly the most distinguished Chinese scholar of the present day, with ample materials for prosecuting this interesting study. To the ardent zeal and indefatigable industry which are essentially necessary to success in all difficult pursuits, this writer fortunately unites a remarkable clearness and sagacity of intellect, by which he is able to turn his materials to the best account, and the talent of communicating his discoveries in a lively and agreeable style. We already owe to him the first intelligible Chinese grammar, that has



ever appeared in Europe, of which we submitted to our readers a brief notice in a former number of this journal. Should he be enabled, as we hope he will be, to continue his researches for a series of years, we anticipate results of great importance, not merely to polite literature, but to the history of the human race, of which the Chinese nation constitutes so large and hitherto so entirely unexplored a branch.

The novel, of which he has now published a translation, was selected from the great number to be found in the Royal Library, from having been particularly recommended by the most intelligent of the Jesuit missionaries, as one of those that enjoyed the highest reputation in the country. The translator has prefixed to his work a long and very entertaining Preface, in which he gives an account of the general character and composition of the Chinese novels. Our readers, we think, will be gratified with the opportunity of perusing a few extracts from this curious dissertation.

'The Chinese are entitled to the honor of having invented the domestic and historical novel several centuries before they were introduced in Europe. Fables, tales of supernatural events, and epic poems, belong to the infancy of nations; but the real novel is the product of a later period in the progress of society, when men are led to reflect upon the incidents of domestic life, the movement of the passions, the analysis of sentiment, and the conflicts of adverse interests and opinions. Fictions naturally reflect the aspect of real life, and change their character with its successive changes. The muse which inspires them was a native of woods and deserts, and at first dwelt in preference in the forest or on the seashore. It was long before she gained admittance into cities, and the Chinese nations, with some of those of modern Europe, are the only ones who have admitted her into their saloons, and allowed her to take a part in the familiar conversations, the friendly meetings, the domestic discussions, the household

diplomacy, and all the little events, that fill up the circle of private life.

'The character of the Chinese novels is the same with that of the better parts of *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, *Tom Jones*, and *Cecilia*. Their authors address themselves to the reason rather than the imagination of their readers. They are less desirous of exciting emotions by bold conceptions and singular adventures, than of offering subjects for reflection, and anticipating the lessons of experience. The other Asiatic nations, led away by a passion for the marvellous, have often disfigured the most respectable traditions, and converted history itself into romance. The Chinese, on the other hand, may be said to have given their romances the truth of history. Nor are they the less entertaining, because they are not wholly destitute of common sense; as we find, in like manner, that among ourselves the most extravagant writers are often the most insipid. Man, considered in his social relations, his vices, inclinations, moral habits, and forms of intercourse, is the ordinary subject of the Chinese novels and plays. They are thus kept within the sphere of real life. The imagination of their writers does not overstep the limits of the world around them.

We are not therefore to expect from them the sort of amusement that we derive from the Arabian Tales or the Hindoo poems. They are perhaps less fitted to amuse children, but are certainly more interesting to mature minds. The scene is laid on the earth we inhabit, and not at the bottom of the sea, on the tops of enchanted hills, or in imaginary regions in the air. We meet with no princes fighting with giants, no princesses carried off by genii, no talismans, no metamorphoses. The personages are men and women acting upon the ordinary motives of feeling and interest, — love, ambition, disinterestedness, or selfishness. Good faith contends with intrigue, honest men carry on the war with rogues, as in real life. With a few changes of names these fictions might pass with us for accounts of real events, occurring in our neighborhood; and nothing can be more similar to Nankin and Canton, than Paris and Westminster. The Chinese novels have also the merit, that their authors are not excessively prejudiced in favor of their own country. They manage the weapon of satire with a good deal of address, not so much in the caustic

and pointed style of *Gil Blas* and *Gulliver*, as in that of the better English novels, where the lesson results indirectly from a correct delineation of vice and its consequences. They excel in details, and may be compared in this respect to Richardson and Fielding, or at least to Smollet and Miss Burney. By this means they acquire a high degree of truth and interest, and produce a very strong illusion.'

It is impossible not to be satisfied by these remarks ( which carry internal proof of their correctness, in the talent and discrimination with which they are written ), that the true plan of the domestic novel has been brought long ago to the same perfection in China, which it reached but recently in modern Europe ; and as, in all the departments of art, the power of execution commonly precedes the discovery of correct methods, we may conclude that the Chinese possess, in their vast collections of polite literature ( which are represented as infinitely more extensive than ours ), many works equal in merit to the best of which we can boast, although their effect upon us can of course never be precisely the same. The high value of these collections, considered merely as illustrations of the state of civilization, is sufficiently obvious, and is dwelt upon at considerable length by our author. Passing over this part of the Preface as less material to our immediate purpose, we come to some further accounts of the subjects generally treated in these compositions.

' Every nation has its particular habits and modes of thinking, which are necessarily described under some varieties of detail in its novels, and give a distinct form to the common fund of incidents which lie at the bottom of all fictitious narrations. In China, the hero of a romance is commonly a young scholar of an excellent disposition, exclusively devoted to the study of the classic authors, and amusing himself in the intervals of leisure with flowers, wine, and poetry. It is not necessary that there

should be any thing chivalrous about his habits or character and provided he excels in writing poetry, it is of little consequence whether he be or be not a fearless and graceful horseman. Nor is it required, as with us, that he should possess a large fortune; for in the favored regions of the Celestial Empire, learning and talent are infallible passports to the loftiest heights of wealth and honor. This is no doubt partly true in fact, since it is received as a principle in all novels, just as it is with us, that a man obtains political advancement by good faith, disinterestedness, and regard for the public good. The incidents habitually employed by writers of different nations, are also extremely various. In the Greek novels, we commonly find a pair of lovers torn asunder, at the moment of their marriage, by a band of pirates, and brought together again by some lucky chance, after suffering a tedious captivity and giving proofs of supernatural courage and virtue. The basis of the French moral tales is gallantry. In Spain, the heroes of romance were long in the habit of rescuing their mistresses from the fury of some mad bull, or the perils of shipwreck. In England, insurrections and conspiracies were for a time the order of the day; but they have lately given way to elopements and clandestine marriages, convenient though hazardous methods of eluding the obstacles, which avaricious guardians too often oppose to the establishment of rich and beautiful heiresses.

‘In China, the two predominant ideas in the world of fiction, as in that of real life, are *promotion* and *marriage*. Every man of any note is constantly occupied, either in distinguishing himself at the literary examinations, or in obtaining a domestic establishment for himself or his children. Marriage is indeed everywhere the most important of all important objects, since it is the basis of all the social relations; and it is particularly interesting to the Chinese, for the additional reason, that they consider it of great consequence, that funeral honors should be rendered to them after their death, at certain stated times in the year, by their male descendants. To marry and to have male issue are therefore matters of the first necessity, with the Chinese of all conditions. *Promotion* is an object which concerns none but the men of letters; but as these are the only persons of distinc-

tion in the empire, the subject is frequently alluded to in literary works. All the Chinese, without distinction of birth, are allowed to present themselves, every year, for literary examination, in their native city, and every three years in the capital of their province. Those who distinguish themselves at the annual examination, receive a literary title or degree, like that of *Bachelor of Arts* at our universities; but in order to derive any benefit from it, they must be annually examined anew for the ten following years. In the mean time they may appear at the provincial examinations, where those who distinguish themselves obtain a higher title, like that of *Master of Arts* with us; and finally, at the general examination, held in the capital of the empire, and under the eyes of the sovereign, where the highest literary dignity, or *doctorate*, is conferred upon the successful competitors.

'All political appointments are regularly made from the persons who acquit themselves with honor at these examinations, it being a received and established principle in China, that talents and merit are the only proper qualifications for public offices. Accordingly all the young men who can read, are constantly engaged in preparing for these examinations. The periods when they are to be held are fixed beforehand, and the measures adopted by the government upon the occasion, excite universal attention. Crowds of spectators assemble to witness these combats of talent and learning: as was formerly the case in France, at the public disputations before the Sorbonne and the University. Fame and fortune depend upon the issue, which is proclaimed with pomp, and becomes the universal subject of conversation. Superiority in wit and learning thus possesses an importance, corresponding with that of political zeal and orthodoxy at our elections. Numerous modes of expression, both in the familiar and elevated style of the language, allude to these examinations; and they are of course very often employed in the machinery of fictitious writing. Thus, in the work before us, the hand of one of the heroines is offered by her father, as a prize, to the competitor who shall produce the best piece of poetry.'

We may remark, *en passant*, that this account of the method of obtaining political advancement in China, though familiar to those who are acquainted with the descriptions given of this empire by the Catholic missionaries, may probably appear both new and curious to the general reader. It gives us a much more favorable idea of the Chinese form of government, than would naturally be derived from the accounts of the persons attached to the recent British embassies of Lords Macartney and Amherst. These writers, with the sagacity and candor which so many British travellers have extended to our country, have been pleased to represent the cudgel as the only element of political or civil power employed among the Chinese; who, on this supposition, would be, what Sir Francis Burdett has so often, in his place in the House of Commons, declared his countrymen to be in reality, a *flogged nation*. One of these narratives contains, in substance, the following sentence, which we quote from memory, and perhaps with some slight inaccuracy of expression. 'Every day through the year, and in every dwelling from the palace to the cottage, the cudgel is constantly going from morning till night, from one end of this vast empire to the other.' Without entering *au fond* into the question of the extent of this supposed cudgel-playing (the British accounts of which would, we shrewdly suspect, be found upon a level in point of correctness with those of the gouging in our Western country, and of Mr Clay's razor-strap made from the skin of Tecumsch), we may remark, that in the four volumes before us, which bring into view in succession the manners of all classes of society, there is not, so far as we recollect, a single allusion to the cudgel.

As respects the political institutions of the empire, it appears from the above extract, and from the more ample information to the same effect contained in the works of

the missionaries, that, although entirely different from any of those that are established in the Western world, they will perhaps bear a comparison with the best of them. The great problem in politics is to reconcile the liberty of the people with a tranquil, wise, and vigorous administration of their common concerns; and experience seems to show, that it can only be solved by providing for a large, regular, and frequent intervention of the body of the community in the conduct of the government. The existence of such an intervention forms the substance of what we consider the great modern improvements in political science, as exemplified in the representative constitutions of Europe, and especially of these United States. This intervention is effected in our system, by securing to a certain number of the citizens the right of designating the public functionaries. The same intervention appears to exist in China to an extent at least as great as with us, and far greater than in any other Christian community; but to be managed on the different principle of securing to every citizen the right of exhibiting his qualifications for filling public offices before a competent tribunal, and the possession of any office for which he can prove himself to be qualified. It is evident that both these methods provide for bringing into activity the whole talent, knowledge, and virtue of the community, and prevent the stagnation and exhaustion that regularly take place, when the power is monopolized by one or more privileged families.

To decide which of the two systems is, on the whole, preferable in its operation, and which is least liable to abuse, is of course beyond the scope of the present cursory notice. Each has, doubtless, its peculiar advantages and defects. While we are naturally inclined, by our national prejudices, to assign to our own form of government, the superiority over every other, we may perhaps

be permitted, as humble labourers in the field of letters, to look with some degree of complacency upon a constitution, which makes literary distinction the only title to advancement, and thus realizes the latter part of the famous alternative proposed by Plato, as the *sine quâ non* of a wise administration of government, that kings should become philosophers or philosophers be made kings. Had this system been proposed in any abstract treatise on civil polity, we incline to think, that it would have been generally viewed as the most beautiful theory that had ever been invented, but as a wholly impracticable and visionary one. A longer experience, than any other form of government has ever been subjected to, has satisfactorily proved that it *works well*. While we are among those who profess to entertain the most sanguine expectations as to the prospects of our own country, we should be glad to feel perfectly certain, that our institutions would stand the test of two thousand years' trial, as well as those of China have done already. Both are no doubt susceptible of abuse in various ways; but it must be recollected, that the security against the abuse of any political institution, does not lie so much in the form and character of the institution itself, as in the condition of the society in which it is established; just as, in private life, our security against being deceived and defrauded by our agents, does not depend so much upon the precise form in which their powers of attorney are drafted (although this is a point of some importance), as on our own capacity for choosing them well, and on the substantial means we possess of subsequently rewarding or punishing them, according to their deserts.

We would willingly enlarge somewhat farther upon this interesting subject, but are compelled by want of room to adjourn our remarks to some future occasion; and must now hasten to lay before our readers a more



particular account of the adventures of *Red-Jasper* and *Dream-of-a-Pear-tree*. The concluding part of the translator's Preface contains some observations on the style of the work, and on the principles by which he has been governed in the translation. It has been made a question, whether titles of honor and address should be retained as in the original, or rendered by such terms, as, according to our usages, correspond most nearly with them. M. Remusat has, judiciously we think, adopted the latter plan, and has in general given his style a more easy and natural air, than could have been expected, considering the great difference in the genius of the two languages; while he has, as he assures us, maintained throughout, on all essential matters, a scrupulous fidelity to the text. Omitting any further notice of these particulars, which, however, will be found highly interesting to the philological inquirer, we shall now proceed to lay before our readers a rapid sketch of the fable, interspersed with occasional extracts, as specimens of the manner; and shall add, if our limits admit, a few hasty suggestions respecting the state of morals and manners indicated in the work.

The opening of the first chapter introduces us into the interior of the family of *Pa-Hiuan*, one of the nine principal masters of ceremonies; who has just received a present of twelve flower-pots, containing China asters in full bloom, and has placed them in his library among a large collection of roses, amaranths, orchises, and other flowers, all in pots of fine porcelain, perfuming the air with their odors, and covering the balustrades and trellises with their foliage. Pa is engaged in admiring his new acquisition, in company with two of his friends, *Gu-Kuay*, a member of the imperial academy of sciences, which is also one of the highest political corporations of the country, and *Sa-Yuan*, one of the inspectors general of

the empire. It is easy to see that we are brought at once into the midst of the highest circles of dignity and fashion. The three friends, after sufficiently admiring their flowers, sit down to drink and make poetry, — selecting for their subject these same China asters, in which they all take so much interest. It appears singular to us to see three grave magistrates wholly engrossed with a few flowers. Our political dignitaries, as M. Remusat justly remarks, have other things to think of; but such appear to be the habits of this empire. Flowers, wine, and poetry are in a manner the staple of the work before us, which wears throughout a gay and Anacreontic coloring; always kept, however, within the limits of perfect decorum, excepting that the heroes now and then take a cup too much.

While the three friends are dipping their hair pencils in their Indian ink, the servants announce the visit of *Yang-Tingcháo*, another of the inspectors general, and the villain of the plot; but a villain of a very decent and respectable class, and in fact not a whit worse than any common rogue in real high life; although he is, like all doubtful characters in a Chinese novel, a very indifferent poet, and, as it seems, no great amateur of flowers, for instead of joining the rest in admiring Pa's present, he immediately falls to talking politics. He is taken to task for this by the others, and sentenced to drink a large glass of wine of about the size of a small tea-cup, but equal to ten ordinary glasses, which it seems hold about a tea-spoonful each. It is then agreed, that the subject of politics shall not be mentioned, and that whoever breaks this rule shall drink a bumper by way of punishment. The three friends now invite Yang to join them in making poetry, to which he demurs on the score of incapacity. A good deal of conversation ensues between Yang and Pa, not always in a very friendly tone, and intermixed with sundry bumpers on both sides, by the effect of which

Pa becomes a little confused, and retires behind a screen to take a *siesta*. In the mean time, one of the servants, who had been in attendance, steals out and informs Houngiu, or Red-Jasper, the only daughter and house-keeper of Pa, of what is going on in the library.

This lady, who, as the reader is aware, is the principal heroine of the plot, though a young beauty of sixteen, is equal to the first doctors in the empire for learning and poetical talent. Hearing that her father is *hors de combat*, she immediately seizes her pencil, and writes a piece of poetry, which she gives to the servant, with an order to deliver it to his master when he awakes. Pa, after sleeping half an hour, rouses himself and calls for a cup of tea. When he has drunk this, the servant hands him the verses of his young mistress, which Pa upon reading finds to his taste, and returning to the company, produces in the first instance as his own. This leads to much astonishment on the part of the others; but Gu who is brother-in-law to Pa, and familiar with his niece's handwriting, soon recognises it, and discovers the trick, which Pa good humoredly avows. They all then unite in extolling the extraordinary talent and beauty of the young lady, and dwelling upon the necessity of procuring her an immediate establishment. Pa now calls for the poems of the others, but Sa, declining to enter into competition with this masterpiece, proposes that they should drink three large cups each, by way of fine, and say no more about it. Yang, who is wholly incapable of producing so much as a single couplet, seconds the motion; and Gu, although he has nearly finished his piece, consents, that he may not be singular. They accordingly drink their three bumpers each, and continue to amuse themselves with drinking and conversation, until the lanterns are lighted and the company disperse. It is evident that the hours of assembling and separating, observed by the fashionable world

in China, are of what we should consider a very patriarchal kind. Whether they are less convenient than ours, is, perhaps, a different question. The poetical masterpiece here alluded to, may serve as a specimen of the verses which are frequently introduced in the course of the narrative, and which regularly adorn the opening of every chapter, as in a Waverley novel. It may be thus translated;

‘ Charming mixture of purple, white, scarlet, and gold !

‘ What divinity produces you at the return of autumn ?

‘ Through the trellis, where we thought to see only the faces of venerable sages, you appear in your beauty like a young maiden at her lattice.

‘ The quiet, the freedom, so dear to me at all times, and which I enjoy in this cool retreat, place me, as it were, in another world ; but cares of state leave me very little leisure to taste these pleasures.

‘ Sweet flowers ! oh that I could pass my days in reclining on a couch, and inhaling your delightful odor ! ’

Red-Jasper's notion of happiness seems to have been much like that of the poet Gray, who, in one of his letters, represents it as the *ideal* of Paradise, to lie all day upon a sofa, and read eternal novels of Marivaux, and — we will not say what other author, out of tenderness for the reputation of the divine minstrel of the Churchyard and Eton College.

Such, however, is a brief sketch of the contents of the first chapter, which throws of itself more light upon the manners of the Chinese of rank and fortune, than all the recent books of travels put together. It also serves as the groundwork of the plot. Yang, excited by the flattering accounts given of the merit and beauty of Pa's daughter, forms a plan of bringing about a marriage between her and his son, a youth, as it afterwards appears,

of small literary pretensions, and who obtained, at the annual examination in his native city, only the sixty-third place in the third class. Yang, however, contrives by a little manœuvring, to have his son's character represented in a favorable light to Pa, and solicits for him the hand of the fair poetess. By way of putting his merit to the test, Gu gives a dinner, to which they are all invited, and when the cloth is removed, proposes to the company to make extempore verses. By great good luck the youth acquits himself once or twice somewhat better than might have been anticipated; but is finally detected in an unequivocal false quantity, which decides the matter against him. Yang takes offence at the rejection of his son's pretensions; and with a view at once of revenging himself upon Pa, and of endeavoring to get the decision reversed, employs his influence at court, to have the latter appointed on an embassy, which is to be sent off with a message to the emperor, who was, it seems, at this time a prisoner in the Tartar camp, the empire being under the administration of a regent. From the manner in which this appointment is spoken of, it would seem that the diplomatic line is not a favorite department of the public service among the Chinese. All his friends join in condoling with the unfortunate master of ceremonies upon the occasion; and Yang, as a great mark of favor, offers to get the nomination recalled, if Pa will consent to the marriage. The latter, however, firmly rejects this proposal; and putting a good face upon the matter, expresses his perfect readiness to sacrifice his repose, and, if necessary, his life to the public good, adding that he is not without hope, that he shall be able to procure the emperor's release.

Under these agreeable impressions, he proposes to set off, but finds at the last moment that Yang (who seems to be all-powerful at court) has had him placed in a subaltern rank in the embassy, and not at the head of it,

according to the first arrangement; his case being similar to that of one of our citizens, who, after being appointed Minister Plenipotentiary, should be commissioned as Secretary of Legation. This commutation is of course not very agreeable to Pa, more especially as it deprives him of the power of rendering any considerable service. According to our occidental etiquette, it would have been viewed by most persons as a proper occasion for retiring from public life. Pa, however, sacrifices all scruples to his zeal for the welfare of the empire, proceeds manfully upon his mission, and after a prosperous journey returns without accident, somewhere about the middle of the second volume. In the mean time, in order to secure his daughter against the intrigues of Yang during his absence, he entrusts her to the protection of her uncle Gu, who retires with her from the capital, and after a journey of about a month, (steamboats and rail-roads being probably not in use in the Celestial Empire), arrives at the city of Nankin, where he establishes his residence.

The chief object of Gu, as the young lady's guardian, is to find a suitable match for her; and he makes use of every effort to settle this important affair at once, in order to surprise his friend Pa with a son-in-law upon his return from Tartary. Constantly intent upon his purpose, Gu remarks in one of his promenades in a favorite pleasure garden near the city, a poem of extraordinary merit, inscribed upon the wall of a summer-house, and signed *Sa-Yupe of Nankin*. This person turns out to be a nephew of the inspector general Sa-Yuan, with whom we made acquaintance in the first chapter, and is the hero of the story. Perceiving that the ink with which the poem is written is still fresh, Gu concludes that the author must be in the garden or its neighborhood. After some search, he succeeds in getting a sight of him, and is so much pleased with his personal appearance, that he

immediately fixes upon him as the future spouse of his niece. Proceeding, however, with due circumspection, he makes enquiries respecting the young man's character and situation, and ascertains that he is an orphan of about twenty years of age, without fortune, and a stranger at Nankin, where he is residing as a student at the college. This union of circumstances would not perhaps be regarded in our more interested western regions, as constituting a remarkably advantageous *parti* for a young, beautiful, and wealthy heiress of the highest rank; but they manage these things more liberally in China. 'The satisfaction of Gu,' says our author, 'was complete when he heard this report. "Since the youth is poor and unmarried," said he to himself, "there can be no difficulty. He has no parents, I have full powers from Pa, the affair shall be settled at once"' It only remains to obtain a full assurance of the qualifications of the bridegroom, by ascertaining the precise extent of his literary talent. Luckily the annual examination comes on just at this moment. As soon as it is over, Gu sends for the printed catalogue of the names of the successful candidates, and finds that of Sa-Yupe, as may well be supposed, at the head. This decisive fact removes all doubts, and Gu determines at once to offer him the hand of Red-Jasper.

The hero and principal heroine are thus fairly brought into presence (as nearly at least as they can be in China, where a man is not allowed to see his wife before the wedding) at the close of the first volume. Adorned, as they both are, with every grace, talent, virtue, and beauty, or, in the Chinese phrase, *all gold and jasper*, moving like superior beings, and without rivals, in the midst of their respective circles of wondering worshippers, they possess of course an irresistible attraction for each other, and (as we observed above of their *pareils* in general) would infallibly, if permitted, rush into each other's arms at the

first interview. The problem with the author, upon the manner of solving which the interest of the plot depends, is to contrive the means of keeping them asunder through the other three volumes. This is effected by a series of difficulties, which resolve themselves too often into mere accidents, and belong of course to the lowest order of poetical machinery, unhappily the one most frequently employed even by the best hands in all countries. Some springs of a finer material are, however, from time to time put in motion; and the intrigue is on the whole not badly managed, when judged by comparison, not with ideal rules, but with good specimens of the European school of romance. We shall briefly notice the principal occurrences that successively obstruct the happiness of the lovers, some or, indeed, all of which illustrate very curiously the manners of the country.

The first is an unfortunate *qui pro quo*, by the effect of which the hero mistakes another person for the heroine, and is induced to form an unfavorable opinion of her appearance. Gu, having made up his mind in favor of the connexion, employs the services of a lady belonging to the respectable profession of *matchmakers*, to carry the proposition to the fortunate bachelor. The business of conducting the negotiations preliminary to a matrimonial alliance, has, it seems, become in China, as might perhaps have been expected from the established customs in regard to the intercourse between the sexes, a distinct and acknowledged occupation; which, from their superior tact in the management of these matters, naturally falls into the hands of the ladies. Madam *Chang*, an experienced matchmaker of high reputation, is therefore despatched to sound young Sa. The latter is agreeably struck with the proposal, but with more delicacy than is usual among his countrymen, positively insists on seeing the bride before he gives a decisive answer. A formal interview



is of course out of the question; but our convenient ambassadress, whose profession it is to remove difficulties, points out to the curious lover a place where he may probably get a sight of his mistress, as she sits at the window of a pavilion in her uncle's garden.

Now it so happens that Gu has a daughter, and that this daughter belongs to the unfortunate category of foils and rivals, a class of characters, who are sometimes, though rarely, honest, but, we may boldly say, never handsome. Gu's daughter is so far from being an exception to the rule, that her very name, *Wouyan*, or *No-Beauty*, indicates but too well the defects in her appearance. As ill luck would have it, no sooner has our hero taken his post of observation, than No-Beauty puts her head out of the pavilion window to look at a flight of swallows. A man of ordinary judgment would have taken care to ascertain that he had seen the right person; but Sa, with the precipitation and wrong-headedness natural to a hero of romance, however in all other respects perfect, does not once conceive that there can be any mistake, and decides irrevocably against the marriage. In vain does the disappointed matchmaker enlarge upon the merit and beauty of the heroine and the advantages of the alliance. All her efforts prove unavailing, and she is compelled at last to give up the point in despair. Gu, on hearing her report, is so much nettled at the perversity of his *protégé*, that he determines to be revenged upon him, and for this purpose makes interest with the examining officer of the city, an old college companion of his own, to obtain a revocation of the degree that has just been conferred upon the young poet. Being, however, naturally a good-humoured old gentleman, he afterwards repents of his severity and gets the title restored. The tractability here attributed to the examining officer may serve to show, that the Chinese system of political advancement, however

beautiful in theory, is like all other human institutions, susceptible of abuse, and affords opportunity for intrigues and evasions not less barefaced than those, which result from the *borough-mongering* of the mother country, or the *caucussing* of ours.

Such, however, is the nature of the first obstacle to the union of the lovers, which, though it shows no great richness of invention, is treated pleasantly enough in the details, and carries us on smoothly some distance into the second volume. The next difficulty is of a more complicated kind, and the exposition of it occupies a much larger space in the work, since the hero is not fairly clear of it till the middle of the third volume. It forms indeed the main knot of the story, and results from the efforts of a stupid rival to appropriate to himself by a series of devices the merit of Sa's poems, and thus eclipse him in the affections of the heroine (which are of course graduated exactly by the scale of the respective poetical talents of her suitors), and secure her hand. We can only indicate in a general way the leading points of this intrigue, which involves a great variety of details, and gives occasion to a number of Sa's finest productions. The outline is briefly as follows.

After rejecting the abovementioned overture, Sa receives an invitation to reside with his uncle, our old acquaintance the inspector general of the first chapter, who is about to pass through Nankin in one of the canal boats, and fixes a place where he will take his nephew on board. Sa sets off accordingly to join him, but meets with an accident that interrupts his journey, and obliges him to take up his lodging for the night in a convent. The next morning, as he is walking about the neighborhood, he falls in with a party of young men in a summer-house, who are engaged in the usual occupation of writing poetry. This time, however, they are not doing it for

mere amusement, but for the purpose of establishing their respective pretensions to the hand of a young lady in the neighborhood, who turns out to be no other than our fair friend Red-Jasper. Pa had, it seems, in the interim returned from Tartary; and learning the failure of the attempt on Sa, he resorts, for the purpose of marrying his daughter, to the expedient of offering her hand as a prize to the person who shall produce the best piece of poetry upon a subject assigned, which is *The Willow-tree in Spring*. Sa, being informed of these particulars, and not aware that the lady in question is precisely the one, whose hand he had already rejected when she was proposed to him as the daughter of Gu, tries his skill on the spot, and produces of course a poem that excites the admiration of the party. They all send their respective productions, carefully signed and sealed, to Pa's house; but one of the others, yclept *Chang-Fanju*, contrives, by bribing the porter, to suppress Sa's letter, and pass off the piece as his own. The poem gives so much satisfaction to the young lady and her father, that the supposed author is invited to take up his residence at the house on probation for a year, during which time he is to act as tutor to a young son.

In this situation Chang, who is wholly incapable himself of writing a decent stanza, adroitly keeps Sa about him, and repeatedly makes use of his talent to maintain the reputation he had already acquired, always passing off the productions of his rival as his own, in particular a superb ode to a pear-tree, which was considered in the family as quite a masterpiece. We may remark *en passant* that the Chinese poets seem to select their subjects, in preference, from the vegetable kingdom; and that among the various sorts of plants the pear-tree is a particular favorite. In this way, however, Chang, though a coarse and ill-favored, as well as an exclusively prosaic

character, acquires much credit in the house, and seems to be in a fair way to carry off the prize. At length Sa, by good luck, and the help of a pretty but knowing chambermaid, in a green gauze robe, with red crape sleeves, called *Yanson*, succeeds in discovering the trick that has been put upon him, and proving to the satisfaction of the young lady, that he is the author of his own poems. After putting his talent to one more test by imposing upon him a difficult acrostic, as a final trial of his skill in poetry, of which he acquits himself as usual, Jasper, overcome by so many proofs of a real talent for all sorts of versification, finally gives her consent that he should apply to her father for her hand. These communications are managed through the medium of the *soubrette*. Sa pleads hard, not for a personal interview, the possibility of which does not occur to him even in imagination, but for an opportunity of seeing his mistress at a distance in profile. Such however is the strictness of the Chinese manners in this particular, that even for this, according to our usages, somewhat modest request, he is taken severely to task by the very chambermaid.

"It is growing late," says Sa, at the close of one of his conversations with this person, "and I must take my leave. Could not I, however, under favor of the darkness, and while there is no one here, obtain a glimpse of your young mistress, were it only in profile?"

"A strange proposal this," replied Yanson. "Let me tell you, sir, that my young lady is a person whose virtue is equal to her wit; and that she is governed in all her actions by the strictest rules of propriety. The affair in which she is now engaged is the most important of her life, and she cannot be blamed for endeavoring to obtain a husband worthy of her. But your request, sir, seems to show that your morals do not correspond with your talent. If I were to make it known to my mistress, she would despise you for it, and reject your suit without hesitation."

Thus severely reprimanded by our stern moralist in red crape sleeves and a green gauze petticoat, and being now more tractable, it seems, in taking a lady's charms on credit, than on the former occasion, Sa is fain to give the matter up, and begs a thousand pardons for his indiscretion. Even these indirect communications are considered too irregular to be made known to the old gentleman Pa; and it is agreed between the lovers that Sa, without alluding to anything that has passed, shall apply to the father through the intervention of his uncle Gu. A matrimonial negotiation must always be conducted through a third person. For this purpose Sa sets off immediately for Peking, whither Gu had in the meantime returned. In consequence of his absence, Chang, now left entirely to his own resources, is soon unmasked by the father, brought to a decisive trial, from which it appears that he cannot write a passable couplet, 'were it his neck-verse at Hairibee,' and being thus plucked of the borrowed feathers, in which he has hitherto plumed himself, is dismissed ignominiously from the house.

Such is the solution of the second principal difficulty which obstructs the happiness of the lovers, and which carries us forward, as we have already remarked, to the middle of the third volume. From this point the current of the action proceeds with comparative smoothness, though not wholly free from shoals and rapids, the nature of which we have not room to describe in detail. The leading object of the last volume and a half is not so much to create and remove new obstructions to the marriage of the principal parties, as to bring forward the second heroine, *Dream-of-a-Pear-tree*, whose introduction is effected in the following manner.

After taking leave of his mistress in the manner above described, our hero sets off for the capital of the empire, where he expects to find uncle Gu. He gets on for some

time prosperously enough; but at length falls in with a band of robbers, and is stripped of every ounce of silver that he has about him. In this embarrassing situation he has recourse to his talent for poetry to recruit his finances, or in the more popular phrase 'to raise the wind.' It is observed by Voltaire, in reference to the great Frederic, that there is always some hope of a king who can write verses; and it appears from the present example, that the rule may be extended to private citizens, at least in China. It so happens that a magistrate named *Li*, residing at the village where the robbery takes place, is preparing a large screen in four parts, as a present for his superior officer; and having already adorned each part with a painting, wants nothing but the appropriate poetical inscriptions to complete his plan. The province of Canton, where the scene is now laid, is, it seems, not so dear to the Muses, as some others, particularly that of Nankin; and *Li* no sooner hears that there is a Nankin poet in town, than he invites him to his house for the purpose of putting his talent in requisition. *Sa* writes the four inscriptions at a sitting, for on this as on all other occasions he (and the case is the same with all the other poets that are mentioned) produces poetry of the first order with a facility only paralleled by that of the Scotts, the Southeys, the Byrons and the Bowings of our time. Whenever his heroes take the pencil in hand, our author is careful to mention the expedition with which they work; and seems to be at a loss for words and images sufficiently strong to give a complete notion of it. Thus, in the present instance, his enthusiasm at the rapidity with which *Sa* wrote the inscriptions, transports him above the regions of plain prose into the following *quatrain*;

<sup>1</sup> The movement of his hand was not slow like that of a pedestrian,

<sup>2</sup> But as rapid as the course of the swiftest steed.

' He starts off and checks his flight with the lightness of a winged spirit ;  
' His thoughts cover the paper as the fleecy clouds spread themselves over the sky.'

In the same way, when he sits down on a previous occasion, by order of his mistress, to write the acrostic which is to decide his fate, notwithstanding the delicacy of the situation, he loses nothing of the freedom of thought and expression.

' Pearls and diamonds,' says the author, ' fell upon the paper like drops of rain in an April shower.'

So when the heroine produces the little *chef-d' œuvre*, which we quoted from the first chapter,

' Thoughts drop from her pencil, like rain from a dark summer cloud ; and spring up under her rapid hand in seven-fold clusters of flowers, till the whole paper becomes, as it were, a chain of pearls and diamonds.'

It must be owned that the Chinese poets, like the Vicar of Wakefield's painter, are not sparing of their jewelry. A slow manner of composing, on the other hand, is the invariable accompaniment of dulness. Thus Pa, after bringing Chang and another stupid pretender to the *experimentum crucis*, goes back to his daughter, and tells her that they had been wagging their heads over their inkstands the whole afternoon, without being able to shake out a word. These passages seem to imply a false notion of the difficulty of writing good poetry, which, we imagine, does not lie in the metrical arrangement, or mere form, as is here supposed. When the rules of versification are once settled, and good models given, it is rather easier to express ideas in these regular measures, than to write harmonious prose. The difficulty lies in supplying ' the thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' These are articles which, as *Géronte* in the play

says of the five hundred crowns, *ne se trouvent point dans le pas d'un cheval*; and there is great room for choice among the fruits of even the finest intellect. 'Good poetry,' says Gray, 'requires the best talents, and the best of those talents.' It must flow with ease, and at the same time exhibit the vigor of thought or imagination and the finished style, which suppose labor, meditation, and reflection. This was the opinion of Boileau, when he boasted that he had taught Molière to write easy verses with difficulty; *Je lui ai appris l'art de faire difficilement des vers faciles*. When a person writes with great rapidity, or, in other words, sets down his ideas as fast as they occur to him, without study or selection, it is certain, whatever may be his talent, that his work cannot be of the first order. In general your easy writing, as was well observed by the author of the 'School for Scandal,' is the hardest reading a man can undertake.

To return however from this digression; our hero, while engaged in writing his inscription in the garden, hears a person say aloud in a pavilion placed in the garden adjoining and overlooking his, that the pomegranate-trees without the wall are in full bloom. This was of course a strong temptation to the flowery fancy of a Chinese; and as soon as he has finished his work, Sa walks out to see the show, in which he is at first rather disappointed, but soon penetrates the real meaning of the remark, when he finds himself accosted by a handsome youth, who issues from a door in the wall of the adjoining garden, and who proves to be no other than Dream-of-a-Pear-tree in disguise. If Red-Jasper hold the post of heroine, this visionary beauty has, we suspect, the whole heart of our author, though he allows her only half of that of his hero. He describes her on this her first appearance in the following terms.



'The gate was seen to open, and there came out a youth of about fifteen or sixteen years of age, dressed in a violet robe with a light cap on his head. His vermilion lips, brilliant white teeth, and arched eyebrows gave him the air of a charming girl. So graceful and airy are his movements, that one might well ask, whether he be mortal or a heavenly spirit. He looks like a sylph formed of the essence of flowers, or a soul descended from the moon. Is it indeed a youth who has come out to divert himself, or is it a sweet perfume from the inner apartment ?'

This charming person enters into a long conversation with our hero, which gradually assumes a confidential character. Sa acquaints his new companion with his engagement to Mademoiselle Pa (as Mr. Remusat generally styles the young lady), who proves to be a cousin of the supposed youth before him. The latter, on hearing of the engagement, remarks that the empire is vast, and enquires of Sa what he would do, if he should find in the course of his travels another damsel equally remarkable for grace, beauty, and poetical talent with his mistress. To this point-blank question Sa very naturally replies, that he has but one heart; which in English would probably be understood to mean, that his affections were preoccupied, and that he could not do justice to the merit of any other object; but being interpreted *à la Chinoise*, implies, that he cannot be insensible to beauty wherever he meets with it, and that if he should become acquainted with another young lady as lovely as Miss Pa, he should of course love her as much. 'If such be the case,' rejoins the youth, 'I may venture to inform you, that I have a younger sister about sixteen years of age, who was in the pavilion yesterday while you were writing, and was so much struck with your agreeable person and dexterity in handling the pencil, that she fairly lost her heart upon the spot. I easily discovered her inclinations, and as we are orphans, and have no

friends to provide for our establishment in the regular way, I took it upon me to sound you on the subject; but since your affections are elsewhere engaged, it were better perhaps to think no more about the matter.' In answer to this, Sa proposes the expedient of a double marriage, which appears to be satisfactory to the other party; and it is then arranged, that he shall proceed to the capital, as he originally intended, and after settling the preliminaries of his alliance with Miss Pa, shall call at Canton on his way back, and conclude the arrangement with Miss *Lo*, who, as the intelligent reader does not require to be informed, has been treating for herself under the name of her sister. She very generously insists upon supplying our hero with funds for his journey; and thus provided, he departs at once without stopping to take leave of the owner of the screens.

In the mean time his new mistress, who seems to have a fund of enterprise and vivacity in her character, without waiting for her lover's return, sets off with her mother for Nankin upon a visit to her cousin. The ladies are very cordially received, and immediately domesticated in Pa's family. The merit of the fair Peartree is soon brought to the usual test, and she is found to possess a talent for poetry little if at all inferior to that of her relation. The two cousins gradually contract a great liking for each other, and in order to avoid being separated at any future period, determine that they will if possible, arrange matters so as to marry the same man. Their dialogue on this occasion may be quoted as a favorable specimen of the style of the work, as well as a curious illustration of the sentiments of the Chinese on this subject. Peartree has just produced a copy of verses in praise of her cousin, who is so much delighted with them, that she exclaims,

"What a charming piece of poetry! It is worthy of the most celebrated ancient writers. Ah, sweet coz, how happy I should be, if I could hope to keep you near me all my life. I would have you, if I could, as close to me as my head-dress."

"Why do you say if you could, sister?" said Peartree in reply; "do you think of sending me away from you? This is but a poor proof of the affection you profess."

"You misunderstand me, my sweet Peartree," said Jasper, laughing. "I have the greatest affection for your person, and the highest opinion of your talent. I would gladly, as I have just said, pass my whole life with you; but I fear that it is not possible, and this fear is the only reason of the sentiment I expressed. Why then should you doubt my affection?"

"Does it not depend exclusively upon us," said Peartree, "to decide whether we shall pass our lives together or not? If we both wish it, who is to prevent it? What can render it impossible?"

"My fear is," replied Jasper, "that you may not really desire it."

"Nay, then," said Peartree, resuming her good humor, "I can have no doubt of your affection, and I am sure that mine for you is unutterable. But you know the condition upon which only we can hope to live together for life; is it to your taste?"

"We are told," replied Jasper, "that Ohoang and Niuying devoted themselves of yore to the single Chun. Were it agreeable to you, my sweet Peartree, I would willingly imitate them."

"If such had not been my desire," replied the other, greatly delighted, "I should not now be here."

"If these celebrated ancient heroines, Ying and Hoang, with whom we can of course make no pretensions to be compared for beauty and talent, did not blush at such a union," continued Jasper, "I know not why we should feel any delicacy about it. But how is it possible to find a person, on whom we can both place our affections?"

"My dear coz," said Peartree, after a moment's reflection, "you permit me to share your confidences; why should we conceal anything from each other?"

"Surely," answered Jasper, "I can have no secrets for you."

“ Let me ask you, then, my sweet Jasper, whether the youth who has already won your heart be a person of so little merit, that we need to look farther ? ”

“ The youth who has already won my heart ? ” replied Jasper, laughing, “ what can you possibly mean, my dear Peartree ? How can you be so absurd as to think that I care for one young man more than another ? And were there even any foundation for such a story, which I am far from admitting, how could it possibly have come to your knowledge ? ”

“ My fair coz,” said Peartree, with a loud laugh, “ if you wish your secret not to be known, believe me, the only way is not to have any. The most trifling actions of a great poet or a pretty woman are matters of public curiosity, and become the subject of general conversation. Far as I live from here, I have long been informed of all this business.”

“ Since you are so well informed, then,” replied Jasper, who rather doubted the correctness of her cousin’s assertion, “ let us know what you have heard. Perhaps it is something about the adventure of Chang-Fanju and the verses on the *Willow-tree* ? ”

“ Nay,” said Peartree, still laughing, “ that everybody knows. I am not alluding to Chang, who attempted to obtain the credit of having written the poem on the *Willow-tree*, but to a certain young gentleman named Sa, who was the real author of that poem, and also of the *Salutation to the Swallow*.”

“ At this remark, which evidently showed a knowledge of her most private sentiments, poor Jasper was at first so much confused, that she could not articulate a word ; but looked in utter amazement at Yanson, as if to ask whether she had betrayed the secret.

“ Why this embarrassment, my sweet cousin ? ” said Peartree, “ are we not sisters ? why should we conceal anything from each other ? ”

“ I know you to be a shrewd girl,” said Jasper, perceiving, after a moment’s hesitation, that it was useless to dissemble ; “ but how you have discovered this affair, I am sure I cannot imagine. I have not lisped a syllable of it to any one but Yanson ; nor ventured so much as to dream about it for fear of betraying myself. Is it possible that one of my women can have played the spy and tell-tale ? ”

"Nay, nay," said Peartree, "make yourself easy on that score, my fair cousin. Your adventure is a secret, for aught I know, from your very guardian spirit. But there is one person who was of course acquainted with it, and who related it to me with his own mouth; I mean young Sa himself. I dare swear no one else is privy to the matter.

"Nay, ooz," said Jasper, "you are surely jesting. It is nearly a year since Sa left us. My father has sent to inquire after him in all quarters, and can hear nothing about him. Supposing him to be at Canton, how could he possibly communicate with you, a young and pretty girl confined to the female apartment?"

"Your question is natural enough," replied Peartree, "but certain it is that I saw young Sa, and that we talked of his engagement with you. I have not the most remote intention of deceiving you."

"And yet," said Jasper, "what you say is neither natural nor probable. How can you expect me to believe it?"

"Believe it or not, as you please," replied her cousin; "the gentleman himself, when you see him again, will at all events assure you that I speak the truth."

"Alas!" said Jasper, "there is but little chance of our meeting again. After all the fruitless researches, which my father has made to obtain news of him, I have but too much reason to fear that he has forgotten me."

"Forgotten you, my dear Jasper?" said Peartree, in reply, "why 'tis for the very purpose of arranging his marriage with you, that he is now travelling about in all directions, without allowing himself a moment's repose or comfort. How can you speak with so much levity of this most excellent and exemplary young man? He distinguished himself very much last autumn at the Northern Examination."

"It was he, then," said Jasper, a little surprised, "who obtained the second place upon the list. How happens it that he was described as a candidate from Honan?"

"The reason was," replied Peartree, "that his uncle, the inspector general, is a native of Honan. He has recently adopted

his nephew, and the latter of course belongs at present to that province."

"Since, then, he has obtained the promotion he desired," said Jasper, "why does he not return to fulfill his engagement with me? How happens it that we have not the least intelligence from him?"

"He is waiting, I imagine," replied Peartree, "until he obtains the highest rank of all. Have a little patience, my sweet coz, and he will make you a doctor's lady."

"You speak with such an air of sincerity, my dear sister," said Jasper, "that I am bound to believe you; and it is certain that you could not have obtained from any other person the information you possess. But how a young girl like you, shut up in the female apartment, should have been able to converse with an entire stranger, I am wholly unable to imagine. If you love me, relate the whole affair to me in detail, before I die of curiosity."

"After all that has passed," said Peartree, "I can do no otherwise; but for Heaven's sake, sweet coz, spare your raillery."

"Nay," said Jasper, "my communications here in the female apartment were something still more singular than your adventure, and will of course close my mouth upon the subject."

"Well, then," said Peartree, "since you promise to be merciful, I will e'en tell you all. You must know, then, that after parting from you last year, young Sa was proceeding to the capital in order to arrange with your uncle Gu the preliminaries of his marriage with you. As he was passing through Canton, he was attacked by robbers, and plundered of everything he had with him. In this emergency, he luckily made acquaintance with a certain Counsellor Li, living in the house next to ours, who engaged him to compose the inscriptions for some screens, which he was preparing, and for this purpose gave him for the time a lodging at the bottom of his garden. I happened to be looking out of the summer-house in ours, as he was writing; and was so much struck by his noble air, and the facility with which he managed his pencil, that I knew he must be a poet of great merit. Orphan, as I was, without father or brothers to provide for my establishment, was I obliged to observe to the letter

all the ordinary rules, and remain unmarried for life? Do not think too hardly of me, my dear cousin, if I confess to you, that I ventured to deviate from them in this extreme case, and putting on a man's dress, had a personal interview with Sa without the garden gate."

"Well done, Peartree!" said Jasper, struck with astonishment, and at the same time highly gratified with this account. "So young, and so much wit and resolution! You are really a heroine! But, cousin, how came he to speak of his engagement to me? This young student of ours must be a great babbler."

"Not at all," replied Peartree; "he is, I assure you, a model of discretion. But you must recollect, that I made proposals to him to marry my sister, that is, myself; and when he repeatedly declined, and I as often insisted upon knowing his objection, he had no resource left, but to inform me of his engagement with you. He concluded, of course, that I could have no concern in an affair that happened a thousand miles off, and was far from dreaming that he was talking to me about my own cousin. Providence, my dear sister, seems to have interposed specially, in order to manage this matter in the way most favorable to our happiness."

"And what," inquired Jasper, "did you finally agree upon?"

"When I found that he was under a prior engagement," replied Peartree, "which nothing would induce him to relinquish, and saw that he was a young man of firm and steady character, I proposed to him, always speaking as if for my sister, the expedient of a double marriage. As he appeared to be satisfied with this, I next resolved to remove to this place with my mother, in order to ascertain your wishes, and complete the arrangement if it should prove agreeable to you. The warm and tender attachment which I have since formed for you, my sweet sister, makes the connexion appear ten times more delightful to me than I had expected. Heaven has surely interposed in a visible manner in our behalf."

"You are a charming creature, my sweet Peartree, and have quite cleared up the mystery that covered the proceedings of Sa, and explained them in the most satisfactory manner. If we do but complete the arrangement, I will acknowledge you for a greater heroine than any one on record."

It will be observed, that although the form of the marriage here treated of is different from that in use with us, and the tone of the conversation sportive and lively, the parties observe the same perfect decorum which is usual in reference to the same subject, in the polished societies of the western world. Indeed, the work before us is so far from approaching in any part to undue freedom of thought or expression, that it supposes and exemplifies throughout, a degree of reserve in the ordinary intercourse of the sexes, which appears, when judged by our notions, excessive and ridiculous. The reader will agree with us, we think, in considering the above passage as a favorable specimen of the author's talent for easy and spirited dialogue, which is, after all, the principal attraction in the domestic novel. The characters of the young ladies are also discriminated with some degree of delicacy, and correspond pretty nearly with those of *Caroline* and *Rosamond* in Miss Edgeworth's 'Patronage';—Jasper, all perfection; Peartree, perfection alloyed and made more interesting by a few grains of *étourderie*. The above dialogue resembles in tone those of *Celia* and *Rosalind* in Shakspeare's 'As you like it,' and partly coincides in the turn of thought, with that which passes between *Portia* and *Nerissa* and their husbands in the 'Merchant of Venice,' at the close of the fifth act. We have taken the liberty of employing an abridged translation of the names of the ladies, as a method of escaping from the stiffness of the Chinese nomenclature, and giving the conversation a natural air, in preference to the plan adopted by M. Remusat, of affixing to the original family name the terms of address in use with us. *Miss Pa* and *Miss Lo* would appear in English like decided burlesque; while the names as translated, being of a slightly comic cast, are, in this respect, in keeping with the tone of the dialogue, and tend to heighten rather than



diminish its effect. We perceive, however, that we are approaching the extent of our limits, and must hurry rapidly over the rest of the narrative.

The reader will have gathered from the contents of the above dialogue, that the hero of the novel, after parting from the second heroine, meets with his uncle, the inspector general, is adopted by him, and then proceeds to the capital to pursue his studies. He there distinguishes himself as usual, obtains at the general examination the thirteenth place on the list of the doctors, and, at the final one before the emperor, comes out at the head of one of the two classes of these dignitaries. This rank gives him the right of entering the *Jasper Hall*, and mounting the *Golden Horse*, or, in plain language of being admitted into the Imperial Academy of Sciences; a distinction which also regularly carries with it an appointment to one of the great offices at court. But by the intrigues of some powerful friends of the disappointed candidates, he does not receive the promotion properly due to his success, and only obtains an appointment of judge in a remote province. Without, however, making any difficulty on the subject, he sets off pretty soon to take possession of his place, calling on his way first at Honan to offer sacrifice at the burial-place of his ancestors, and afterwards successively at Canton and Nankin to arrange his marriage with his two wives. Unluckily he is disappointed in meeting with both. Dream-of-a-Pear-tree, as the reader is aware, had left Canton, and no one there could give the least account where she had gone. She had herself sent a messenger to Sa, to inform him, whom he had missed by crossing him on the road. Proceeding thence to Nankin, he finds that Pa has gone upon an excursion of pleasure to the Western Lake. During his absence, no access can of course be had to the family. Having no leisure time upon his hands to make

farther inquiries at the moment, he reluctantly continues his journey to his place of destination, where he finds himself acting immediately under our old acquaintance, the inspector general Yang, who now reappears in his former capacity as the villain of the plot.

As soon as Yang perceives the extraordinary merit of our hero, he pitches upon him for his son-in-law; and when the latter declines the proposal on the score of his previous engagement to Red-Jasper, Yang circulates a false report of her death. Sa, however, is too much distressed at this event, to think of another marriage; and Yang, thus failing entirely in his purpose, begins to persecute the young judge in such a way, that he resigns his place in disgust, and sets off to refresh himself upon an excursion to the Western Lake. Here he falls in with Pa, and makes acquaintance with him; but as both had assumed feigned names and characters in order to travel with more freedom, they meet as perfect strangers. After talking literature and making poetry together for a few days over their cups, they gradually get upon a confidential footing, and let each other into the secret of their respective family affairs. It soon appears that Mademoiselle Pa is not dead, that Dream-of-a-Pear-tree is residing with her at the old gentleman's, that the latter is as anxious for the marriage as any of the parties, and that there is now nothing to prevent it. In the meantime, the intrigue at the capital by which Sa lost his regular promotion is discovered, and he is permitted to mount the Golden Horse without any further delay. Everything being thus arranged to the general satisfaction, the marriage takes place, and as usual, closes the novel.

Such is the outline of the fable of this very curious work. We have omitted, of course, all the secondary and episodical parts, in particular, the whole machinery of divination, which is used with a good deal of freedom,

and exercises considerable influence in the knitting up and unrayelling of the plot. From this abstract, however imperfect, of the contents of the novel, the intelligent reader will see at once how much light it must necessarily throw upon the domestic and political economy of the vast empire in which the scene is laid, and may conjecture what stores of information will probably result from future researches into the same mine that has furnished this specimen. We are prevented by want of room, from entering at much length into a commentary upon the state of civilization in China, as indicated by the work before us ; and must reserve most of the remarks which occur to us upon the subject, for some other occasion.

We may observe, in general, that the condition of society in this remote quarter of the globe seems to resemble that, which exists among ourselves, more nearly than has hitherto been supposed ; and that the points of difference (which are nevertheless considerable) are not, in all respects, (though they certainly are in some very important ones) to our advantage. As regards the leading principles of domestic economy and the intercourse between the sexes, the Chinese are doubly unfortunate in the allowance of polygamy on the one hand, and the unnecessary restrictions imposed upon ordinary and harmless conversation on the other. The system that prevails on this subject in all the Christian countries, though strictly conformable to nature, and apparently the one that would suggest itself most readily to every correct mind, has never been adopted in any other part of the world, and is doubtless one of the circumstances that have contributed most powerfully to the progress of civilization in Europe ; as it was itself, on the other hand, the effect of the general influence, upon all classes of the community, of our pure and sublime religion. In some

other principal features in the aspect of domestic life, the deep veneration of children for their parents, the warmth and tenderness of all the family relations, and the universal polish and softness of manners, we might perhaps with advantage take some lessons from the natives of the Celestial Empire.

Their political institutions, which have been hitherto but little examined, are, as we hinted above, well worth the attention and study of philosophers; and might perhaps furnish useful suggestions for the improvement of governments founded in the main on other principles. The constitution of the Chinese empire, instead of being, as is commonly supposed, an absolute and unmitigated despotism, in which the only element of power is the cudgel, is evidently one of the most popular forms of government that has ever existed; and although the mode of bringing the will of the people into action is different from the one in use with us, we are not compelled to conclude without examination, that it is therefore necessarily bad. The difference of form renders each system, on the contrary, a more interesting and useful object of study, to those who are familiar with the other.

As intellectual accomplishments are apparently much more important and valuable to their possessor, and as civilization is also of much older date in China than in Europe, it appears singular that the Chinese should not have carried the sciences to a higher degree of perfection, and should be in this respect decidedly inferior, as there is reason to suppose they are, especially in the mathematical and physical departments, to the western world. With our present scanty information respecting their institutions, situation, and manners, it would be idle to attempt to assign any precise reason for this inferiority. We may venture perhaps to conjecture, that the vast political importance attached to learning, may have turned

the current of zeal and industry almost wholly into the channel of moral and political studies, which are those immediately required as preparatory for the public service, and have led to the comparative neglect of all other branches of learning. Civil polity, we know, is habitually spoken of by the Chinese, as the *great science*, or, in their own phrase, *the highway*; and as it seems, at any rate, to be the one which leads to the possession of wealth, rank, and beauty, it is not very surprising that the majority should regularly follow it. But on this, as on all other points connected with the subject, we must wait for the fruits of further researches before we can speculate with much satisfaction, or draw conclusions with any great degree of probability.

## THE SABBATH.

[Lady's Book.]

Of all the subjects that can be presented to the consideration of the people at large, Religion is the one, in which they take the deepest interest. Of all the occupations in which they can be engaged, religious exercises are those, which habitually produce in their minds the strongest excitement. If it were the object of a law-giver, independently of any other consideration of expediency or duty, merely to provide the people with the means of agreeable occupation and amusement for a day of rest, he could not do it so well, if at all, in any other way, as by instructing them to devote it to religion.

Religion reveals to us the secret of our higher and better nature; lifts us above the common offices of daily life, into communion with the sublime Spirit, whose word created, and whose incomprehensible essence informs and sustains the universe. It teaches us, that we are not, as the base theories of a detestable sophistry would represent us, merely a different order of the same race of beings with the brutes that surround us, destined like them to pass an ephemeral existence, and then sink into nothing; but that we possess within us, the germ of a heavenly nature, for which death is only the opening of a new form of existence, and which will develop its faculties hereafter, through countless ages of happiness or misery, accordingly as the opportunities for improvement afforded here have been used or neglected.

Religion expands the intellect, by familiarizing us with the most interesting questions in the philosophy of matter and mind. It enlarges the heart, by repressing the selfish, and encouraging the social and benevolent feelings. It checks our pride in prosperity, and our depression in adversity, by impressing upon us the trifling importance of our present interests, when compared with those that belong to us as candidates for a higher state of existence. It consoles us under the agony of parting from those we love, by the reflection, that we shall meet them again in scenes of permanent happiness. In a word, it changes the universe from a chaos of confusion and misery, to a grand and beautiful creation, the fit residence and temple, of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity.

It is not in nature for those who believe these sublime truths, to hear about them, and think about them, without the strongest excitement. What is there in the most absorbing affairs, the most exquisite entertainments, that can ever claim in any respect to come into competition with them? What is there, for example, in the fable of the most highly wrought and beautifully written romance, which can be compared for deep and absorbing interest with the splendid history of creation and redemption, of which the record is the Bible, the scene the universe, the time eternity, God, superior beings, and ourselves the subjects? Who ever complained of not being interested in the proceedings of a case at law, in which his property or his life was at issue? In the case which is argued every Sabbath in the courts of God, there is more at stake than any earthly property, or mortal life, — our share in the inheritance of a better world, our happiness or misery throughout all eternity.

The mightiest minds of every age and country, have exhausted the resources of language in expressing the delight with which they habitually dwelt on this subject.

"I would rather," says Lord Bacon, "believe all the fables of the Talmud and the Alcoran, than that this universal Frame is without a Mind." Schiller, in his beautiful Hymn to Pleasure, represents her banner as waving upon the sunbright rock of Religion. With the monarch minstrel of Scripture, the being of God is made the motive for general exultation and jubilee. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice." He does not consider it a tiresome or gloomy occupation of time, to attend public worship. "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go up to the house of the Lord; my soul longeth, yea fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."

Will it be said that these are the high aspirations of superior minds, improved by every accidental advantage, but that they are above the comprehension of the mass of the people, who can only be excited and amused by objects and pleasures of a purely sensual character? Those who entertain this opinion, do great injustice to the mass of the people, and have formed a very inadequate conception of the dignity and elevation of the human character, even in its lowest estate. To all who have reflected on the science of government, and arrived at just conclusions, it is known, that religion is the chief element which consolidates and holds together the fabric of society. In a great many countries it is the force ostensibly and formally employed for this purpose; in others, as with us, it operates indirectly; but how would it produce the effect in either way, if the mass of the people were indifferent to it? It was said by Gibbon, that the introduction of Christianity was one of the principal causes of the decline of the Roman empire. This is wholly false in fact; and sounder thinkers, reasoning on a directly opposite view of the subject, have agreed, that the civilizing and consolidating influence of Christianity on the rude



minds of the barbarian invaders of that empire, was the chief cause which formed the new political creations that grew up out of its ruins. "The kingdom of France," says Montesquieu, "was the work of the bishops," and we know, that with the pope at their head, they governed Europe for several centuries. In all this there was much abuse, but the very extent of the abuse proves the strength of the principle. If the mass of the people are indifferent to religion, how happened it, that the whole civilized world was thrown into convulsion for a hundred and fifty years, by the religious divisions of the Reformation,—convulsions of which the great political revolutions of our day are among the indirect results?

Or to look more nearly at our own people, and the common experience of daily life, what are the books that circulate most widely, through all the classes of the community? We know, that where the popular works on any other subject are sold by thousands, those that treat of religion, are sold by tens and hundreds of thousands. Would this be the case, if the people did not feel a deep interest in the subject? It will perhaps be said, that this difference is in part the effect of exertion. There are Bible Societies, Tract Societies and Missionary Societies, which are all busy in distributing religious books, and this is the reason why they circulate so widely. But why are there no such associations for the distribution of books on history, politics, and the other branches of useful knowledge? There is evidently no other reason, excepting that the people take a much deeper interest in religion than they do in any of these subjects, interesting and important as they all certainly are.

It is said that public devotional exercises, are regarded by the people as gloomy or tiresome. How happens it then, that in each of our large cities, forty or fifty churches, are regularly crowded every Sabbath twice, and often

three or four times in the same day? I had the pleasure not long since, of attending an evening lecture in one of the largest Churches in Boston, where every seat up to the top of the pulpit stairs was occupied, and every alley filled with persons standing, all listening with breathless interest to a sermon a full hour long. There were probably very few of this audience, who had not attended Church twice before, on the same day, and not one who was under any obligation, or compulsion to attend at all. In the less thickly settled parts of this country, where the means of assisting in the public exercises of religion are not supplied in the usual way, the inhabitants of a considerable extent of territory, collect together from time to time, and hold a permanent assembly of several days for that purpose, under the name of camp-meeting. Is it probable that crowds of people would congregate from distances of thirty, forty, or perhaps a hundred miles, and engage by the week together in devotional exercises, if they felt no interest and took no pleasure in them? I mean not to commend in every respect the order or the results of these meetings, but I say, that they strongly evince the deep hold which the subject takes of the public mind.

Facts like these, sufficiently prove, that it is not considered by the public, as a gloomy or tiresome employment of the Sabbath, to devote it to religious exercises. Where the attention is deeply, without being painfully engaged, the frame of mind is for the time agreeable; and I am far from being certain, that any thing would be gained on the score of cheerfulness, even by substituting a different method of observing the Sabbath, from that which is generally in use in this country. It has been my fortune to witness the celebration of this sacred festival, in some of the capitals of Europe, where the greater part of it is regularly devoted to public sports, and where the theatres

are open twice as long, as on any other day of the week. I have seen the French peasants dancing under the trees on Sunday afternoons, in their holiday dresses ; and I can say with perfect truth that I know no place, in which the return of the Sabbath is welcomed with so much satisfaction, and the occupations it brings with it pursued with so much interest, as in the metropolis of the Pilgrims, where it is wholly devoted to religion. Let any one walk the streets of Boston on a fine Sabbath morning, when the bells are all ringing, and the whole population of both sexes in their best attire, repairing to their respective places of worship, and if the scene do not produce upon his mind a more pleasing impression than the tumult of a bull-fight, or the noisy mirth of a rustic dance, I can only say that his mental constitution is different from mine.

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POEMS.



## THE HERMITAGE.

## AN EASTERN TALE.

[Boston Miscellany, October, 1842.]

THE following Poem may be considered, so far as the substance is concerned, as a sort of literary curiosity. The fable on which it is founded, is an episode in a Sanscrit work, entitled the *Brahma Purana*, supposed to be, at least, as ancient as the period of the Trojan war. The tale is, therefore, the oldest specimen of comic poetry known to be extant. The translation from the original Sanscrit was made by the late M. de Chézy, one of the greatest oriental scholars of our time in France, and read by him at a public meeting of the French Academy. The manuscript was afterwards communicated to the Baron Augustus W. von Schlegel, Professor of Oriental Literature at the University of Bonn, on the Rhine, by whom it was translated into German, and published in a periodical work called the *Indian Library*. The French translation of M. de Chézy has, I believe, never been published; the German one of Schlegel has been used for the present purpose. I am not aware that the tale has appeared in any form in England.

The plot turns upon the well-known principle of the Indian mythology, which supposed, that by a sufficiently long and severe course of penance and sacrifice, a man might acquire superhuman powers, and even obtain in time, a right to a seat in the Celestial Synod, in which case some one of the previous tenants was under the necessity of vacating his place in order to make room for the new comer. The gods could not of course, look with much satisfaction upon the efforts of these candidates for admission into the sacred college, and were in the habit of throwing in their way such temptations as they thought most likely to interrupt the course of their devout exercises, and thus frustrate their plans. These ideas, as the reader will recollect, are employed by Southey as the basis of the machinery of the *Curse of Kehama*. In the following tale they are ridiculed by the native author in a tone of pleasantry, not less pointed, but more graceful and chastened than that of the similar efforts of the Lucians, Aristos, Voltaires and Wielands of later periods. It is not perhaps, to be wondered at, that specimens of this kind of writing,— which is one of the natural products of certain periods in the progress of opinion in all communities,— should be

found among the copious remains of Sanscrit literature. It is rather more singular that a lively and pointed satire on the then prevailing superstitions should be imbedded,—so to speak,—in a bulky commentary on the sacred books ; for such is the nature of the work from which the tale is extracted.

## PROLOGUE.

### I.

The Grecian gods possess'd their heavenly state,  
    (If rightly ancient bards the story tell,)  
On solid tenures, fore-ordain'd by fate,  
    In modern language, indefeasible.  
In order first the great Triumvirate,  
    That rul'd the realms of ocean, earth and hell,  
And under these the immortal House of Peers,  
But all secure from change by force, or lapse of years.

### II.

If Jove, provok'd, not without cause, (at times  
    The gods, God knows, were worse than indiscreet,)  
Compell'd some one, in penance for his crimes,  
    To vacate for a while his golden seat ;  
Toss'd Vulcan headlong down to earthly climes,  
    Or hung out Juno, dangling by the feet ;  
The offender still return'd, — his penance o'er, —  
And all went on as smoothly as before.

### III.

And when some lucky wight by special grace  
    Or high desert a seat among them won ;  
Like that young Trojan by his blooming face,  
    Or by his valiant deeds Alcmena's glorious son,  
The God Elect assum'd an equal place,  
    But trench'd not on the rights of any one ;  
Each eye grew brighter, — every tongue ran glibber, —  
To welcome the new fellow-nectar-bibber.



## IV.

But customs change with climes. The Hindoo gods  
 Acquir'd and held their thrones in different guise :  
 Mere mortals there might reach the blest abodes  
 By constant penance, pain and sacrifice.  
 To starve, — to freeze, — to scourge one's self with rods, —  
 Were deeds of such esteem in Brahma's eyes,  
 That they would change, — if kept up long enough, —  
 Poor human nature to celestial stuff.

## V.

But mark the rest. The Hindoo destinies,  
 Lest over-population should encumber  
 The heavens, had order'd that their deities  
 Should never rise above a certain number ;  
 And that whene'er a mortal reach'd the skies  
 By dint of pain, and loss of food and slumber,  
 Some former occupant, — a serious case, —  
 Should forthwith quit the field, and give him up his place.

## VI.

In short, the Hindoo heavenly constitutions,  
 Although divine, were somewhat democratic,  
 Resembling much our modern institutions  
 Of Congresses or Diets diplomatic,  
 Whose members, still in constant revolutions,  
 Pursue each other's steps in course erratic ;  
 As sovereigns order, or the people chooses :  
 And what one gains another always loses.

## VII.

So stood the law. To me, I freely own,  
 The Grecian system seems by far the better ;  
 Fitted to introduce a friendly tone,  
 And sentiments of kindness and good-nature

'Twixt gods and men : for there each god look'd down  
Encouragingly on the human creature,  
Who sought by noble deeds an apotheosis,  
And, if he won it, felt as great a glee as his.

## VIII.

Whereas the Hindoo deities beheld  
With jealous eyes these lofty aspirations,  
Knowing that they could never be fulfill'd,  
Without dislodging them from their high stations ;  
And when they were reluctantly compell'd  
To own that men deserv'd such elevations,  
Instead of cheering them and giving them assistance,  
They left no stone unturn'd to keep them at a distance.

## IX.

In such a case, 't was still their treacherous course  
To tempt the candidate to mirth and pleasure ;  
And could they bring him by some bright *amorce*,  
To give himself though but a moment's leisure ;  
Such was the statute's unrelenting force,  
That he was cheated of his long-sought treasure ;  
And was oblig'd, though after years of pain,  
To forfeit all their fruits and start afresh again.

## X.

A policy like this may seem below  
A god of honor : but 't were wrong to blame  
The Hindoo deities : the case, we know,  
Was no child's play, but life and death to them.  
What means they us'd to entrap a dangerous foe ;  
What baits and snares to lure him to his shame ;  
And how sometimes their treacherous arts prevail,  
Is set forth briefly in the following tale.

## THE HERMITAGE.

## I.

In Eastern climes, some thousand years ago,  
About the time when Ilion's glory fell,  
Where smooth Gomati's limpid waters flow,  
A certain CANDOO fixed his domicil.  
His food the plants that on its margin grow,  
His drink the simple elemental well,  
His holy heart untouched by carnal passion,  
In short a hermit after Parnell's fashion.

## II.

Fair was the spot, and Candoo might have pass'd  
A happy life in such a hermitage,  
And felt, in sweet composure, to the last,  
The quiet of a philosophic sage ;  
For Nature all her gifts around him cast,  
To suit the taste of each succeeding age,  
And make them all serenely glide away,  
Like the calm hours of an unclouded day.

## III.

What broke the charm of Candoo's residence ?  
Ambition. Candoo could not be content  
To taste the joys that courted every sense,  
And be the happy man that nature meant :  
His soul was ardent, — his desires immense, —  
And all his views on high achievements bent, —  
And Candoo thought that mere felicity  
For one like him was mortal *ennui*.

## IV.

Ah Candoo ! you'll repent, perhaps too late,  
These idle dreams, —'tis labor spent in vain.  
The man, says Horace, who can regulate  
His own desires, — whate'er his outward train, —  
Is, after all, a mightier potentate  
And one that governs a more vast domain,  
Than if the subject universe obeyed his  
Imperial sway from Mexico to Cadiz.

## V.

The real goods of life are in your reach, —  
Improve them, Candoo ! ere the sense be gone ;  
Pluck the fresh blossom, — taste the blushing peach, —  
And though a hermit, do not dwell alone !  
Invite some beauteous nymph of honied speech  
To make your little Paradise her own,  
And laugh with her in your sequester'd bower  
At all the mummery of wealth and power !

## VI.

To do him justice, Candoo's thoughts *did* soar  
Above the vulgar flight of low desire ;  
He did not care a straw for wealth or power,  
Titles, high rank, and all that fools admire :  
He aimed at other objects, and far more  
Sublime : — his wishes modestly aspire  
To nothing lower than the blest abode ;  
And Candoo could not rest until he was a god.

## VII.

'Tis said that one may reach the Hindoo skies  
With ease, by making earth a purgatory :  
The fact, perhaps, is true, — I trust it is,  
Because it makes the basis of my story :

But for myself, — to speak without disguise, —

I doubt that it must be a very sorry  
Sort of divinity, that one might gain  
By suffering in the flesh a little transient pain.

## VIII.

But be that as it may, his priests had said

To Candoo, that the achievement could be done :  
And from that time he could not rest in bed

Until the preparation was begun.  
And such a life as the poor fellow led,  
Such scorching in the hottest noon-day sun :  
Such fasting, flagellating, sacrificing :  
Freezing and thawing, — 'twas indeed surprising.

## IX.

And really 't is a melancholy sight,

To see a hearty and a healthy man,  
Striving to make himself, as if in spite  
Of fate, as miserable as he can :

To eat and drink at meals, to sleep at night,  
Of course were quite forbidden by his plan :  
Such abstinence is far from gratifying ;  
But there were other matters much more trying.

## X.

Sometimes, just in the hottest of the weather,

He set at once four large wood-fires to burning,  
And stood where he could feel them all together,  
And roast himself completely without turning.

At other times, when storms began to gather,  
And all the world for warm, dry clothes was yearning :  
Candoo would put him on a cold, wet shirt,  
And roll for hours together in the dirt.

## XI.

To mention how he sate upon a spike,  
 Trod on hot irons without shoe or stocking,  
 Tore pieces from his live flesh, and the like,  
 Were needless, and to many might be shocking.  
 In short, although his enterprise will strike  
 Most readers as a piece of senseless mocking,  
 The zeal with which he undertook it, was,  
 As men say, worthy of a better cause.

## XII.

The gods at first took little note of this,  
 And only sneer'd at such gross mummery :  
 They thought it comic that a head like his  
 Should think itself mark'd out to rule the sky.  
 But finding his achievements still increase,  
 And that the thing was looking seriously,  
 Indra, \* a god more knowing than his fellows,  
 Began at length to grow a little jealous.

\* Indra, a God of high consideration in the Hindoo mythology, though not of the first order, is the Ruler of the Firmament, including the winds and stars. He is represented as a handsome young man with a crown on his head, four arms, and a body covered all over with eyes, — in allusion, probably, to the four points of the compass, and the stars. His dwelling, kingdom, or paradise, called *Indra loga*, (Indra's lodge,) is on Mount Meroo, (the Olympus of the Hindoos,) but below the Paradise of the three great gods. Indra is supposed to have obtained his rank and power by the same means which Candoo employs in the Poem to displace him ; and has been already ousted more than once in a similar way ; so that his apprehensions were not entirely without motive. The Devas, (Divi of the Romans,) and Gandharvas, mentioned in the text, are inferior orders of divinities under the government of Indra, and residing in his Paradise. The latter appear to have been the musicians of the court : two of them have the appropriate names of *Haha* and *Huhu*.

## XIII.

"Pramnocha!" \* quoth the god with anxious mien,  
 Unto the prettiest of the Hindoo graces,—  
 "Pramnocha!" — I could wish her name had been  
 As pretty as the poets say her face is ;  
 But still the two last syllables are seen,  
 As Schlegel truly says, — in other places,  
 And it were hypercritic to reproach a  
 Sound, which is just the pure Italian *occia*.

\* Pramnocha, and her sisters or cousins, mentioned in the text, belonged to another order of inferior divinities, also residing at the court of Indra called *Apsaras*. They were the dancing girls of the place. The individuals recommended by Pramnocha as so much more eligible than herself for the commission, had been employed before on similar services without much success, so that Indra's preference was not entirely arbitrary. Rambha, for example, had been sent to seduce Wiswamitra, and made her approaches to his residence nearly in the same way with Pramnocha in the tale : but the sage, instead of giving way to her seductions, maintained his self-possession, and compelled her to pay pretty dearly for her presumption, by uttering a curse upon her, which transformed her for ten thousand years into a stone. Urvasee was not much more fortunate in a similar attempt upon Arjuna, a noted hero and demi-god of the Hindoo mythology. This personage, being on a visit at the court of Indra, the god entertained him with a festival, to which all the principal characters of the place were invited. On this occasion Arjuna was thought to pay particular attention to Urvasee, and Indra was induced, in consequence, to intimate to her, that she would do well to make the 'nation's guest' a visit at his lodgings. Urvasee consented, and set forth one fine evening upon the expedition. The poet of the Mahabharata, who relates the anecdote, gives a very glowing description of her personal charms. 'When the moon arose, and the fresh breeze of evening began to be felt, she left her apartment to proceed to the palace of Arjuna. Her long hair, adorned with flowers, and curled, fell in graceful ringlets over her shoulders, as she moved in the light of her beauty. So bright was her smile, and so gentle the expression of her eyes, that she seemed, as it were, to challenge the moon to a contest for the prize of loveliness with the moon of her countenance,' &c. All this display was, however, lost upon the hero, who, upon her arriving at his palace, and making known, without much ceremony, the object of her visit, replied, that he could not look upon her in any other light, than as his grandmother. It seems, in fact, that Urvasee was one of the Pooroo line

## XIV.

"Pramnocha!" — good or bad, since that's her name,  
And must be so in spite of all we can do, —  
"I don't quite like the doings of this same  
Half-crazy, self-tormenting creature Candoo.  
He'll cheat one of us of his diadem,  
There's nothing like him since the time of Pandoo; \*  
And I must beg of you, my little beauty!  
To visit him, and bring him to his duty."

## XV.

Pramnocha had a spice of coquetry,  
Like other beauties, in her composition,  
And probably was pleas'd at heart to be  
Despatch'd upon this sort of expedition :  
But then she had the graceful modesty,  
That suits a lady of such high condition,  
And thought it due to fashionable uses,  
To preface her acceptance by excuses.

## XVI.

"Indeed ! good Indra !" quoth the blushing fair,  
"I would obey you with the greatest pleasure,  
But really, I must say, I hardly dare  
To venture on so delicate a measure :

of demi-gods and goddesses, from which Arjuna himself was descended. Whether the lady was uninformed of his relation to her, or whether she supposed, that the law, which prohibits a man from making love to his grandmother, was not in force upon Mount Meroo, does not appear. The anecdote is a sort of counterpart to one that is told of Ninon de l'Enclos.

\* Pandoo was an ancient hero, the founder of the family of Pandoos whose wars with the rival family of the Kooroos form the subject of the great epic poem of the Ramayana.



The world is critical, and does not spare  
 The greatest ; — reputation is a treasure ;  
 And common usage does not grant its permit,  
 For a young maid to call upon a hermit.

## XVII.

Besides ;" — and as she spoke, she cast a glance  
 Bashfully down upon her well-cut boddice, —  
 " I'm such a fright to-day, that complaisance  
 Itself would hardly take me for a goddess ; —  
 And looking as I do, I stand no chance,  
 Upon my word to attract the sage's notice :  
 Do, Indra, send my cousin Urvasee ;  
 You know that she's much prettier than me."

## XVIII.

" Nay ! nay ! no idle talking !" — quoth the god, —  
 "'Tis thou must undertake the task, my dove !  
 But take for company upon the road,  
 The Spring, the Western Wind, and little Love.  
 Their prattle will amuse you, and 'tis odd  
 If all of you are not enough to move  
 The constancy of one old anchorite :  
 So haste, my dear, and mount your ray of light."

## XIX.

At this Pramnocha, with her fairy train,  
 Took passage gaily on a solar beam,  
 And soon they 'lighted on the Hindoo plain,  
 Like fitting forms in some bright morning dream.  
 Nor did these lovely visitants disdain  
 The beauteous banks of smooth Gomati's stream ;  
 But deem'd them, drest in Spring's delightful guise,  
 Almost a match for Indra's Paradise.

## XX.

All-giving Nature pour'd profusely there  
In tropic wealth her gayest fruits and flowers.  
The golden Lemon scents the vernal air  
With sweetest fragrance : the Pomegranate bowers  
With scarlet blossoms glow ; erect and fair  
The stately tufted Palm above them towers ;  
While fluttering round on richly painted wing,  
The feather'd warblers hail the genial spring.

## XXI.

And little streams to cool that garden green,  
With purest waves run gently purling through ;  
And here and there a silver lake is seen,  
O'erspread with Lotus, purple-flower'd and blue :  
While sailing slow the fragrant cups between,  
The milk-white swans their steady course pursue,  
And birds of every name disporting lave  
Their plumes, and dash around the sparkling wave.

## XXII.

Charm'd with the scene, Pramnocha stray'd awhile  
In this fair bower, and, where the waters gleam,  
She stopp'd at times, and, gazing with a smile  
In the clear mirror of the glassy stream,  
" I fear," she said, " a face like this will spoil  
Our holy anchorite's ambitious dream :  
This travelling really makes one look quite blooming ;  
And then, — but stay, I think I hear him coming."

## XXIII.

Meanwhile the Spring, to please his partner kind,  
With brighter tints had touch'd each flowret fair ;  
And breath'd in gentle sighs the Western wind  
A melting softness through the vernal air ;

While little Love, to mischief well inclin'd,  
 His delicate enchantments did not spare,  
 But threw his darts about by quivers-full,  
 Enough to make a stoic play the fool.

## XXIV.

Pursuing now to Candoo's lodge her way,  
 (The worthy penitent had just suspended  
 Himself on tenter-hooks, to pass the day,  
 Nor dream'd how soon his toils would all be ended,)  
 The graceful nymph began a charming lay,  
 Which Indra's self had many times commended;  
 And Candoo, struck by that strange melody,  
 Leap'd from his hooks at once, and ran to see

## XXV.

Whence came the sound : — "And who art thou," he cried,  
 " Angelic beauty ! from what region stray'd ?"  
 " Alas ! most reverend father !" she replied,  
 " No beauty, but a simple rustic maid,  
 Who came to wander by Gomati's side,  
 And pluck the flowers in which it is array'd.  
 If my poor service can afford you pleasure  
 In aught, most holy Saint ! I'm quite at leisure."

## XXVI.

Ah Candoo ! yield not to the smooth disguise  
 Of modest words and female witchery !  
 'Tis true I counsell'd not your enterprise,  
 And call'd it nonsense and mere mummery ;  
 But since you undertook to mount the skies,  
 And mortal glories could not satisfy  
 Your mighty soul, display at least a human  
 Courage, and be not conquer'd by a woman.

## XXVII.

What! shall a wight who aim'd at Indra's throne,  
Be worsted by a spinster in address?  
A learned sage's constancy o'erthrown  
By a white bosom and a pretty face?  
And twenty years of labor lost for one  
Glance of a little smiling traitoress?  
Nay, man! for shame avert those eager looks,  
And hang yourself again upon your hooks.

## XXVIII.

Vain caution! Candoo's head was always weak,  
And long exhaustion doubtless made it weaker;  
Nor did he once suspect the lurking trick  
In the fair semblance of that gentle speaker.  
Besides, what firmness does not sometimes shake?  
Who knows but we that frown had yielded quicker?  
In short, our hermit felt the beauty's power,  
And led her blushing to the nuptial bower.

## XXIX.

Her three companions, seeing the success  
That had attended the negotiation,  
Now parted from the fair ambassadress,  
And mounted gaily to their former station;  
The gods all crowded round with eagerness,  
And heard with loud applauses the relation;  
This done, with many a flowing bowl they quaff'd her  
Health, and old Meroo shook beneath their laughter.

## XXX.

This sudden match was not so ill-assorted,  
As many readers may at first suppose;  
For Candoo, by the pains he had supported,  
Had gain'd the power of changing as he chose

His outward shape : at least 't is so reported  
 In Hindoo authors of repute, and those,  
 Who doubt the tale, may find another just  
 Such change describ'd at full in Goethe's *Faust*.

## XXXI.

No more an aged wight with meagre limbs,  
 Care-furrow'd face and haggard eyes and hollow,  
 To please his youthful bride at once he seems  
 In form a youthful Bacchus or Apollo.  
 Loose flow his curling locks like sunny gleams  
 From his broad front and every motion follow ;  
 While new-born Love with purple radiance dies  
 His glowing cheeks and lights his flashing eyes.

## XXXII.

And now no more of penitence or pain,  
 No more of scourging, fasting, maceration ;  
 But love and laughter o'er the mansion reign,  
 Where pining misery lately held her station.  
 Swift fly the hours, an ever joyful train,  
 On fairy wings of sweetest occupation ;  
 Nor did our happy lovers heed their flight,  
 Or scarcely mark the change of day and night.

## XXXIII.

For each to other then was all in all ;  
 A little world, — a paradise of pleasure ; —  
 The nymph forgot the joys of Indra's hall ;  
 The sage his hard-earn'd, long-expected treasure.  
 Their life was one unceasing festival,  
 That left them neither memory nor leisure ;  
 And days, and weeks, and months had pass'd like one  
 Hour in the joy of this long honey-moon.

## XXXIV.

At length, as Candoo by his lovely bride  
One evening sate and marked the setting sun,  
He started suddenly and left her side,  
As recollecting something to be done ;  
And " pray, my ever-dearest love ! " he cried,  
" Excuse me for a moment while I run  
To offer my accustom'd sacrifice :  
To intermit this holy exercise

## XXXV.

A single day, would ruin me forever."  
" And pray, most revcrend anchorite ! " replies  
With an arch smile, the little gay deceiver,  
" Inform me how your holiness espies  
A difference, which I in vain endeavor  
To find, between this hour of sacrifice  
And all the rest, which we have pass'd together,  
Since first in happy hour I wander'd hither."

## XXXVI.

" What others ? " cries the sage, in strange dismay ;  
" What others can have pass'd ? My love is mocking  
Others ? Why is not this the very day,  
When first I saw you by the river walking ?  
And this the first time, that the solar ray  
Has left us since ? What mean you by the shocking  
Thought that my services have e'er been failing,  
And by the smile that on your lips is dwelling ?"

## XXXVII.

" Excuse me, reverend father ! " she replies,  
" I know such girlish levity is quite  
Uncivil ; but to think that one so wise  
Should not perceive the change of day and night ;

'Tis worth a million. That the sun should rise

And set, and you not know it, — is not it  
Most exquisite? The Gods will die with laughing.  
A single day? Why we have here been quaffing,

## XXXVIII.

Feasting and sporting for at least a year."

"Good God!" cries Candoo, — "is it possible?  
And are you not deceiving me, my dear?"

"Deceive you!" cries the nymph, — "oh, capital!  
To think a silly girl, like me, should dare

Dream of deceiving such a miracle  
Of wisdom! — that could never be: — oh no!  
You can't: — I burst with laughing: — wrong me so."

## XXXIX.

"Alas! alas!" quoth Candoo, who began

By this to come a little to his senses,  
And looked as foolish as a learned man

Need wish to, — "curse upon her fair pretences!  
The artful gypsy has destroyed my plan,

And cheated me through all the moods and tenses.  
I'm fairly duped, (like Wellington at Cintra.)  
Madam, adieu! I leave the skies to Indra."

## THE GRECIAN GOSSIPS.

IMITATED FROM THEOCRITUS.

[Democratic Review, June, 1838.]

[THE following little dramatic sketch, which forms the fifteenth Idyll of Theocritus, is, in the original, one of the most agreeable of the minor fragments that remain to us of the Greek poetry. The scene is laid at Alexandria, the great commercial emporium of the eastern part of the Mediterranean. The principal personages are two married women of the middling class, who attend the public celebration of the Festival of Adonis. The commencement of the dialogue gives us an interesting glimpse of the domestic life of a private Greek family, and the succeeding part a lively and graphic miniature sketch of the appearance of the city under the excitement of a public celebration. It is amusing to remark the complete identity of the occurrences described, and the feelings called forth with those which we daily observe on similar occasions among ourselves. The details are executed with the good taste, spirit, and truth to nature, which characterize Theocritus as one of the best of the Greek poets.

The song, which is rather freely paraphrased, alludes to the mythological fable of Adonis, who was represented as living alternately, for six months at a time, on earth and in the lower regions. The fiction is supposed to have been originally an astronomical allegory, but it has been so much embroidered upon that it has nearly lost its character. The Festival of Adonis began with a funeral ceremony in commemoration of his death, and terminated with a jubilee in honor of his return. The song, included in this little drama, belongs, of course, to the close of the festival.

It is a rather striking proof of the comprehensiveness of the Greek language that the original title, *The Women at the Festival of Adonis*, is expressed in Greek by the single word, Ἀδωνιάζουσαι.

## CHARACTERS IN THE DIALOGUE.

GORGON,        } Two Greek women of Alexandria.  
 PRAXINOE,     }  
 EUNOE, a female servant of Praxinoe.  
 OLD WOMAN:—MAN:—SECOND MAN.  
 FEMALE SINGER.



GORGO

*At the door of Praxinoe speaking to Eunoe.*

Eunoe, is your mistress in the house?

PRAXINOE [*from within.*]

Welcome, dear Gorgo! So:—you've come at last.  
I scarce believe my eyes. A chair, Eunoe,  
And put a cushion on it.

GORGO.

Thanks, Eunoe.

PRAXINOE.

Come, pray be seated.

GORGO.

Well,—of mortal women  
Sure I'm the strongest. Such a toil I've had  
To get to thee, Praxinoe,—such a press,  
Men pushing,—coaches driving,—broken pavement,  
Such elbowing, such treading upon toes:—  
And then you live at such an endless distance.

PRAXINOE.

Thanks to my worthy spouse, who bought us,—here  
At the very edge of the world,—this hole, not house;  
I know his plan:—he wanted to remove me  
Out of your neighborhood,—a cruel, cross,  
Ill-humored——

GORGO.

Hush, my dear Praxinoe, hush!  
The babe hears every word you say:—do see  
How the rogue eyes you.

PRAXINOE.

What's the matter? baby!  
Cheer up, my little one! I did not mean  
Your father: — he's not cruel.

GORGO.

He's too kind: —  
A knowing brat, Praxinoe.

PRAXINOE.

Do but hear,  
These husbands are so stupid! Some days since  
I sent out mine to buy a wash, — some white  
And red for my complexion, — and what, think you,  
He brought me home? A jug of plain fresh water.

GORGO.

My Dioclidias is but little better  
In making purchases: — but yesterday  
He undertook to buy some color'd wools  
For my embroidery, and I do assure you  
He purchas'd at a most enormous rate  
The poorest article! But come! to business!  
You'll see the show: — 'tis time we were abroad:  
Where are your cloak and bonnet? 'Tis reported  
The Queen will be most elegantly dress'd.

PRAXINOE.

No wonder: — well she may: but tell us, prithee,  
What will she wear?

GORGO.

Another time for that:  
We've none to lose at present.

PRAXINOE.

Quick, Eunoe!

Some water! — bring it hither! — Come, bestir thee!  
 How like a drone she moves! Now, — fill the basin! —  
 Nay, — not too much! Hold! hold! — you spatter me  
 And wet my linen. Stay! Well, — Heaven be praised!  
 I'm wash'd at last in some sort. Where's the key  
 Of the great press? Quick, bring it.

GORGO.

Dear Praxinoe!

That's a fair robe, and well becomes thee. Prithee  
 What might it cost thee from the loom?

PRAXINOE.

Good Gorgo,

You'll call me wasteful hussey. That robe cost me —  
 More than I choose to tell thee of, besides  
 A world of pains to get it.

GORGO.

'Twas worth while,

For the robe really fits thee well.

PRAXINOE.

My bonnet

And parasol. Good bye, boy! — I'll not take thee  
 For fear some horse should bite thee. Be a good babe,  
 Or else the old witch will come. Nay, cry, if thou wilt,  
 'Tis better so than hurt. Come, let's away.

[ *To a servant.* ]

Phrygia, divert the babe, call the dog in,  
 And lock the outer door.

[ *Without.* ]

Good Lord! what crowds!

How can we ever pass? The street's alive,

Like a mere ant-hill. What a world of good  
 Our noble monarch doth ! Before his time,  
 While his late father reign'd, of glorious memory  
 On such a day as this the street was fill'd  
 With pick-pockets. Oh mercy ! mercy ! Gorgo !  
 Here are the King's war-horses. Sure as life  
 They 'll trample on us. Spare us, do, dear driver !  
 For pity ! — There ! — the bay horse rears, — Oh m  
 How wild he is ! Eunoe, you rash creature !  
 Come to my side. He 'll surely kill his rider.  
 Thank Heaven, I left the babe at home.

GORG0.

Praxinoe !

'Tis over now. We 're safe, and all the people  
 Stow'd snugly in their places. Never fear !

PRAXINOE.

Yes, here at last we 're safe. From quite a child  
 A horse and a live snake are the two things  
 I hold in most aversion. Let us hasten ! —  
 Here 's a fine crowd !

GORG0 [*to a woman.*]

Art from within, good mother ?

OLD WOMAN.

Aye, children !

GORG0.

Is the pass clear ? Could we easily  
 Find entrance to the palace ?

OLD WOMAN.

Easily ?

You can but try. The Greeks, by frequent trying,  
 You know, took Troy. Trying, my honey damsels,  
 Brings many a thing to pass.

GORGO.

The old lady speaks

Like any oracle.

PRAXINOE.

Let alone women

For knowing every thing. She'll tell, I warrant you,  
How Jupiter woo'd Juno.

GORGO.

Look, Praxinoe!

What crowds about the door!

PRAXINOE.

Astonishing!

Gorgo, your hand! Eunoe, hold by Eutychis!  
And closely or they part us. Now we enter  
Together. Close, Eunoe! — Mercy on me!  
Me miserable! They've torn in two my mantle.  
Oh, Gorgo! — Do, for Heaven's dear sake, dear man!  
Do, as you prize your happiness, save the pieces.

MAN.

I did not tear it, but will gladly aid you.

PRAXINOE.

A frightful crowd! — They jostle one another  
For all the world like swine.

MAN.

Cheerly, my ladies!

Your're safe at last.

PRAXINOE.

Good man! good luck attend thee  
Now and forever for thy kindness. — Gorgo!  
'Twas a nice, well-bred gentleman. Where's Eunoe?  
Oh, there she struggles. Here we are, child! come!  
Well jostled, wench! — Now we are all safe within,  
As the husband said who lock'd his wife out o' doors.

GORGO.

Look here, Praxinoe ! Mark that fine embroidery !  
How delicate and rich ! 'tis sure the work  
Of more than mortal fingers.

PRAXINOE.

Great Minerva !  
What weaver could have made this stuff ? What limner  
Mark'd out so gloriously those forms ? What nature  
And truth they stand and move withal ! I swear  
There's life there and no needle work. Well ! well !  
Man *is* a wondrous creature. Oh how beautiful  
The youthful God lies on his silver bed !  
Dearest Adonis ! Thee the very shades  
Look kindly on.

SECOND MAN.

Nay, hold your clacking, gossips !  
A pair of chattering pics ! I can't abide  
Your coarse, broad Syracusan.

GORGO.

Heyday, man !  
Who made thee our task-master ? Magpies are we ?  
Catch us, then, if you'd cage us ! Syracusans !  
I'd have you know, sir, that we came from Corinth,  
And speak like good Corinthians. 'Tis a hard case  
If women may 'nt converse in their own language.

PRAXINOE.

Well answer'd, sweet-heart ! we'll not be brow-beaten.  
I wish the rogue may not prove mischievous.

GORGO.

Hush ! hush ! Praxinoe ! for the Grecian girl  
Prepares to sing. 'Tis she that led so lately  
The dirge of Sperchis. She'll do wonders, — hark !

## S O N G.

Hail Cytherea,  
Pride of our coast !  
Welcome Adonis !  
The lov'd one, — the lost !  
Death could not hold thee  
In his dark reign ;  
Fate has restor'd thee  
Blooming again.

## 2.

Princes and heroes  
Rest in their urns.  
No ! not another  
Save thee returns.  
Death could not hold thee  
In his dark reign ;  
Fate has restor'd thee  
Blooming again.

## 3.

Wake to salute them  
Music and song :  
Pour in their pathway  
Roses along !  
Hail Cytherea !  
Pride of our coast !  
Welcome Adonis !  
The lov'd one, — the lost !

## 4.

Victor of agony !  
Victor of night !  
Welcome again  
To the regions of light !

Hell could not hold thee  
In his dark reign ;  
Fate has restor'd thee  
Blooming again.

## 5.

Beauty beside thee,  
Bright in her charms,  
Waits to receive thee  
Back to her arms.  
Hail Cytherea !  
Pride of our coast !  
Welcome Adonis !  
The lov'd one, — the lost !

## 6.

Egypt exulting  
Rouses her throng ;  
Shares in the triumph,  
Joins in the song.  
Hail, Cytherea !  
Pride of our coast !  
Welcome Adonis !  
The lov'd one, — the lost !

## GORGÓ.

A sweet, ingenious ditty ! — Let me tell thee,  
Praxinoe, that same minstrel is endow'd  
With a rare wit, and what she doth invent  
She clothes in delicate language. Come, away !  
My husband is yet dinnerless. At best  
He hath a testy humor, and when fasting  
Is a mere savage. Fare thee well, Adonis !



## THE EXILE'S LAMENT.

IMITATED FROM THE FIRST ECLOGUE OF VIRGIL.

[Boston Miscellany, September, 1842.]

AFTER the close of the civil wars, which ended in the acknowledgment of Augustus as Emperor of Rome, the territory of several of the Italian cities was confiscated, and distributed in lots among his disbanded soldiers. Among these cities was Cremona, and the territory not having *held out* as well as was expected, a portion of that of the neighboring city of Mantua was taken *sans cérémonie* to make up the deficiency. Hence, the well known verse in another Eclogue, *Mantua, vix miseræ nimium vicina Cremonæ!* Among the occupants of the Mantuan territory thus invaded was the poet Virgil; but on his personal application to Augustus for redress, his property was restored to him and secured in his possession.

These incidents form the subject of the poet's first and best eclogue, in which he introduces himself in the character of a shepherd under the name of Tityrus; describes his journey to Rome for the purpose of laying his case before the emperor; expresses his gratitude for the protection afforded him, and consoles with his neighbor Melibæus, who laments very bitterly the necessity of quitting his paternal property. The personage of Melibæus is rather more prominent than the other, and suggested the title, which has been prefixed to the imitation.

## CHARACTERS.

FIRST SHEPHERD, *called in the original, MELIBÆUS.*

SECOND SHEPHERD, TITYRUS.

The former having quitted his cottage on his way into exile, accompanied by his flock, passes the house of his neighbor representing the Poet, whom he finds reclining under a beech-tree, and holds the following dialogue with him.

*First Shepherd.*

While you, my friend! beneath your beech-tree laid,  
Whose spreading branches yield so cool a shade,  
Attune your oaten pipe to sylvan lays

And make the woods resound with your Aminta's praise ;  
We, hapless exiles, forc'd afar to roam,  
Leave our lov'd fields and all the joys of home.

*Second Shepherd.*

Oh Melibœus ! sure a god bestow'd  
The blessing on me ; he shall be a god  
To me forever : at his honor'd shrine  
Shall often bleed some tender lamb of mine,  
The generous Prince, who heard and did befriend  
An humble shepherd, gave him leave to tend  
His flocks at pasture on their wonted plains  
And freely sing his own dear rustic strains.

*First Shepherd.*

Oh, blest with all a shepherd need desire !  
I may not envy, but I must admire  
Your happy fortune, — thus to hold your ground  
When wild confusion shakes the country round.  
But I, less favor'd, feel the general shock ;  
Forsake my home, and sadly drive my flock  
To exile with me. All unus'd to pain,  
The puny wanderers scarce the toil sustain.  
This ewe, that fainting in my arms I hold,  
Just bore me twins, — the promise of the fold,  
But all too weak to join the travelling flock,  
Poor things ! I left them on the naked rock.  
Alas ! good friend ! too well I now recall  
The various omens that foretold it all.  
For this the lightning struck so many an oak ;  
For this the crow would sit for hours and croak  
On yon old holm-tree : — signs, that might have taught.  
A child, had I, dull fool, but mark'd them as I ought.  
No more of this, nor let my selfishness  
By such complaints your faithful heart distress

With useless grief,—but tell me, gentle friend !  
 The god, the generous Prince you thus commend,  
 The noble patron to whose kind decrees  
 You owe your fortune,—tell me who he is.

*Second Shepherd*

When I to Rome —— good shepherd ! hast thou heard  
 What wonders lurk beneath that little word ?  
 For me, I own, before I view'd her towers,  
 I fondly thought her some such place as ours,  
 Our pretty Mantua, where so oft we drive  
 Our flocks to market. Shepherd, as I live,  
 It shames me now the idle dream to tell,  
 That liken'd things in no way parallel.  
 Why, gentle shepherd ! Rome as far outvies  
 All other towns, her lordly turrets rise  
 As far above all fear of rivalry  
 Or envious peerage, as the cypress tree  
 In yonder garden towers in spiry pride  
 Above the lowly bushes by its side.

*First Shepherd.*

But what of Rome ? what powerful cause or care  
 Could lead a rustic swain to wander there ?  
 Explain, good shepherd !

*Second Shepherd.*

Freedom ! gentle friend !  
 To sue for Freedom was my glorious end.  
 Sweet nymph ! she mock'd my hopes with long delay ;  
 She made me linger till my locks were grey ;  
 But smil'd at last. Good shepherd ! I had been  
 Too long the victim of a thriftless quean,  
 On whom, enthrall'd by love's inglorious chains,  
 In costly gifts I wasted all my gains,

Nor hop'd for liberty, nor car'd for gold.  
In vain I toil'd ; in vain the victim sold  
For many a shrine ; — in vain my cheeses bore  
The highest prices ; empty was my store :  
My Galatea wanted all and more :  
At length, — though much too late, — Aminta's eyes  
Revers'd the charm, and taught me to be wise.

*First Shepherd.*

Aminta's charms your heart may justly move,  
Since thus she gave you life as well as love.  
I well remember when the voyage you made  
To Rome, how oft the graceful mourner pray'd  
At every altar, call'd in loud despair  
The gods to aid her ; still with generous care  
Kept the ripe fruit that paid her husbandry  
In mellow pride untouch'd upon the tree.  
For you, my friend, the fruit was kept, — for you  
She wept and pray'd : — we all, — the country through  
Deplor'd your loss, — the very groves of pine  
Lamented it in tears of turpentine ;  
Grief's gushing tides each fountain's margin wet,  
And alders shone with dew-drops of regret.

*Second Shepherd.*

In truth, good shepherd ! much it griev'd my heart  
From such a mistress, — such a friend to part,  
But nowhere else could I pursue my end  
With like advantage, — nowhere else attend  
The generous patron, in whose honor'd name  
Twelve times each year my loaded altars flame.  
At Rome I found him, — there my suit prefer'd ;  
All trembling I, while he as kindly heard.  
And, courage ! shepherd ! — never fear ! — he said ; —  
Pursue your labors ! till your wonted glade

In peace ! — no stranger shall invade your plains  
Or dare to interrupt your much-lov'd rustic strains.

*First Shepherd.*

Oh favor'd ancient ! dwelling as before  
On your own fields ! — nor need you wish for more.  
Small though they be, and of that narrow bound,  
Half, naked rock, and half, a swampy ground,  
O'ergrown with rushes, — they to you become,  
Being, as they are, the dear domain of home,  
More rich and charming than Hesperian bowers.  
Amid their well-known haunts and wonted flowers  
No pasture strange shall harm your pregnant ewes,  
No stranger flock contagion shall diffuse  
Among them : — here beneath your beech-tree laid,  
Beside the babbling brook you court the shade.  
From yonder willow hedge the toiling bee  
With drowsy hum shall sing your lullaby ;  
The distant woodman trill his ditty clear  
To rock and hill ; and on the elm-tree here  
Your favorite bird, the pretty ringdove, woo  
His gentle mate, the constant turtle coo.

*Second Shepherd.*

Delightful thoughts ! and ere your friend shall cease  
To bless the giver of a boon like this,  
Great Nature's general laws no more shall stand ;  
Deer tread the deep, and fish frequent the land ;  
The Parthian bathe him in the turbid Rhine  
And blue-eyed Belgium bask beneath the Line.

*First Shepherd.*

Less favor'd we to various regions haste,  
Crete, — frozen Scythia, — Afric's thirsty waste, —

Or northward, where the circling Sleeve \* divides  
Britannia's cliffs from all the world besides.  
Ah luckless shepherd ! shall I e'er again  
Some ten years hence behold my lov'd domain ?  
My little palace, roof'd with thatch, espy,  
In time, at least, at its low door to die ?  
Oh God ! what horrors civil discord pours  
Upon the people, — all my rural stores, —  
The rich reward of all my toils and cares, —  
My golden grain, — my curious grafted pears,  
My luscious grapes ; — all sacrific'd to feed  
The ruffian butchers, by whose rage we bleed.  
Away, my goats ! — poor fools ! — in other time  
How blest ! — away ! — no longer shall you climb  
With skilful step the mountain's beetling brow  
While stretch'd in some green bower, I view you from  
below ;  
No more I sing ; — I feed my kids no more :  
Song, labor, pastime, hope itself is o'er.

*Second Shepherd.*

Hard lot ! but, gentle friend ! forget your care !  
And deign to-night my humble roof to share ;  
Sweet apples, chestnuts, cheese in plenty spread  
Shall be your meal ; — fresh leaves your fragrant bed.  
Night hastens on : — o'er yonder roof aspires  
The smoke, up-curling from the evening fires,  
And from the hills the sun descending throws  
A lengthening shade ; — 't is time to seek repose.

\* The French name for the British Channel is *La Manche*, *The Sleeve*

## SCENES FROM GOETHE'S FAUST.

[Boston Miscellany, October, 1842.]

THE plan of *Faust* was conceived by Goethe very early in his literary life, but was executed slowly and at long intervals of time. The first draft is supposed to have been made between 1770 and 1775. It was published, for the first time, in 1790, in a complete edition of the author's works, where it appeared as a fragment, without the introductory scenes, and with important variations, in other respects, from its later form. It was first published in its present shape in the edition of the author's works that appeared in 1807. In the introductory stanzas, which were then prefixed, for the first time, under the title of *Zueignung*,—‘Dedication,’—and to which the translator has given the title of the *Spirit Land*, the poet expresses his feelings on resuming the favorite work of his earlier years at a later period of life, when most of the friends and companions of his youth had been separated from him. The stanzas are distinguished by a tenderness and delicacy of sentiment, which are not very frequently the prevailing characteristics of Goethe's works, and which render this one of the most pleasing of his minor poems.

## I.

## THE SPIRIT LAND.

Again ye throng around me, shadowy dreams,  
 That wont before my youthful eyes to play !  
 Shall I once more your ever changing gleams  
 Attempt to catch before they pass away ?  
 And now ye nearer press. Then since, it seems,  
 Ye must and will appear, I bid you stay ;  
 Although your presence racks my tortur'd brain  
 With a deep sense of long-forgotten pain.

For with you come fond thoughts of many a day  
Of bliss, and many a form to fancy dear ;  
And like some ancient, half-remember'd lay,  
Departed loves and friendships re-appear,  
Fresh bleeds each grief, that time could ne'er allay ;  
And memory reckons o'er, with wo severe,  
The good, whose flower of happiness was crost  
In its fresh bud, — the early lov'd and lost.

They cannot hear the lays that now I sing,  
The gentle hearts, for whom I sang before ;  
Dissever'd is the friendly gathering,  
And that first kind response returns no more.  
The few survivors of my joyous spring  
Are scatter'd far o'er every sea and shore,  
While I, abandon'd, tune my ancient strain  
To a strange crowd, whose very praise is pain.

And o'er me steals a long unfelt desire  
To reach the silent, solemn *Spirit Land* ;  
Low, lisping notes, as of the *Æolian* lyre,  
Breathe from the strings beneath my wavering hand ;  
Tears follow fast on tears ; the soul of fire  
Grows faint and weak, by softness all unmann'd ;  
And the fair scenes, in which my lot is cast,  
Appear like dreams ; — I live but in the past.



## II.

## SCENE IN THE LIBRARY.

## CHARACTERS.

FAUST.

WAGNER, a Student, residing in his house.

The outline of the plot of Faust is, of course, familiar to most readers. Dr. Faustus, a distinguished scholar of the middle ages, makes a compact with the Prince of Darkness, by which he surrenders his soul to eternal punishment hereafter, on condition of renewing his youth, and being gratified in all his wishes in this world. After the dedication, and the introductory scenes, the piece opens with the appearance of Faust, or Dr. Faustus, seated in his library, — surrounded with books, and at the same time beset with cares and doubts, — the victim of weariness, disgust and despair. While he is indulging in a train of reflections on the vanity of learning and science, analogous to these sentiments, he is overheard by Wagner, a student residing in his house, who supposes him to be reciting a Greek play, and comes in to improve himself in the art of declamation. The following dialogue takes place between them.

*Faust.*

Oh death! — 'tis he! — I know his knock :  
Perdition seize the senseless block !  
While communing with spirits, face to face,  
'Tis hard to be call'd off by this dull Pratapace.

*Wagner (enters).*

Forgive me, sir! I heard your declamation,  
And thought you must be reading some Greek play.  
I long have wish'd to mend my recitation :  
'Tis necessary at the present day,  
A clergyman, indeed, — 'tis often said, —  
Should to an actor go to learn his trade.

*Faust.*

Aye! — if he mean himself to be a player ;  
And that is not unfrequently the case.

*Wagner.*

But how should one, who hardly feels the air,  
Or sees the light, except on holidays,  
Chain'd to his parchment rolls, without vacation,  
Know any thing of graces or persuasion ?

*Faust.*

Persuasion, friend ! comes not by toil or art ;  
Hard study never made the matter clearer :  
'Tis the live fountain in the speaker's heart,  
Sends forth the streams that melt the ravish'd hearer.  
Then work away for life ; heap book on book,  
Line upon line, and precept on example :  
The stupid multitude may gape and look,  
And fools may think your stock of wisdom ample :  
For touching hearts the only secret known,  
My worthy friend, is this : — to have one of your own.

*Wagner.*

But still the manner's every thing in preaching :  
I know it, though I fail in that partic'lar.

*Faust.*

Manner ! find out some matter worth the teaching,  
Nor be for words and forms a barren stickler.  
The spirit's all : — no matter for the letter.  
Good sense and truth are good enough for men.  
Hast any thing to say ? Out with it, then !  
And the more natural the style, the better.  
Your pompous words, your phrases nicely join'd,  
Will find the people deaf as any adder ;  
They're but dry leaves, that rustle in the wind,  
No comfort for the soul ; — peas in a bladder.

*Wagner.*

But art, alas ! is long and life is short ;  
How much to learn ! — how little time to learn it !  
This studying hard is, after all, dull sport,  
And head-aches often force one to adjourn it.  
How hard to master all the kinds of aid  
That help us on to learning's fountain-head !  
And then, before the journey is half made,  
The chance is, the poor traveller is dead.

*Faust.*

What fountain-head ? Is parchment then the spring  
At which the soul must quench its dying thirst ?  
My friend ! for this no streams refreshment bring,  
Unless the source in thine own bosom burst.

*Wagner.*

But, pardon me ! it gives me great delight  
To enter into the spirit of various ages,  
And see the progress we have made in light,  
Compar'd with what was known by ancient sages.

*Faust.*

Great progress, to be sure ! — of ages past,  
Mine honest friend ! the knowledge we inherit  
Is small : their history is a book seal'd fast : —  
And what we call the spirit of an age  
Is commonly the gentleman's own spirit,  
Quickening the letter of some musty page.

*Wagner.*

But then mankind, the world, the human heart,  
You'll grant that these, at least, are points of knowledge.

*Faust.*

Points, if you please, — but which, with all your art,  
You'll find it very hard to learn at college.  
Besides, — what serves your learning? When all's o'er,  
You dare not tell the world what you have learnt :  
The few, that, having gain'd this valued lore,  
Had not sufficient caution to disguise it,  
And to the crowd display'd their precious store,  
Have for their pains been crucified and burnt,  
To prove how well the crowd knew how to prize it.  
But come, my friend, — 'tis late ; — we'll break off here.

*Wagner.*

Sir, as you please ; — I gladly would remain  
To talk with you so learnedly a year.  
I hope to-morrow you'll give me leave again  
To ask a few more questions of you here.  
Though I know much, I cannot but feel uneasiness  
Until I reach the bottom of the business.

After the retirement of Wagner, Faust relapses into his former gloom. Dark and bewildering thoughts crowd upon his fancy and plunge him deeper and deeper into the "slough of Despond," in which he is engulfed, until, at length, in his agony of feeling, he resolves to shake off the burden of his miserable existence by suicide. He grasps the poisoned vial, which he has long kept ready for this purpose, and is in the act of lifting it to his lips, when his ears are saluted from without by the sound of cheerful voices singing, in several choirs, the Easter Hymn of the Catholic Liturgy, which celebrates the resurrection and ascension of the Redeemer. The several stanzas sung by the different choirs, with the reflections successively made upon them by Faust, close the scene.

*Chorus of Angels.*

Rejoice ! ye sons of men, rejoice !  
Awake the choral strain !  
The Savior who was crucified,  
Has broken his death-chain ;

And mounting high above the sky  
To realms of brighter day,  
He points you to a better world,  
And proudly leads the way.

*Faust.*

What glorious sounds are these that break at once  
So loud and clear upon the stilly night?  
Is this the midnight bell that should announce  
The approach of Easter Sunday's holy light?  
And does the choir repeat the charming strain,  
That angels sang of old on Judah's blessed plain  
Proclaiming peace on earth — but hark! that sound again!

*Chorus of Women.*

With sweetest spices o'er him strew'd,  
In finest linen bound,  
We laid him, — we that lov'd him much, —  
In his cold burial-ground;  
And now we fondly come again  
To wash with many a tear  
The grave in which we buried him, —  
But ah! he is not here.

*Chorus of Angels.*

Rejoice! ye sons of men, rejoice!  
The Loving One that bore  
The agony of death for you,  
Is buried here no more;  
But mounting high above the sky  
To realms of brighter day,  
He points you to a better world,  
And proudly leads the way.

*Faust.*

Celestial sounds ! why come ye here to greet  
A grovelling earth-worm with your cheerful breath ?  
Go ! tell your tale where hearts congenial beat,  
I hear the message well, but want the saving faith.  
Faith dearly loves the miracles she hears,  
And ~~most~~ delights, where wonders most abound ;  
But I no more may reach the lofty spheres,  
From which the voice of Revelation sounds.  
Yet ah ! in youth how sweetly o'er me fell  
Heaven's kiss of love upon the Sabbath day !  
How full of meaning was the deep-ton'd bell !  
And what an extasy it was to pray !  
Strange longings led me from my parent's hearth  
O'er hill and dale to wander far and near ;  
And there with many a hotly-gushing tear  
I felt an unknown world within me have its birth.  
And now, — e'en now, — with that accustom'd song,  
So often heard in youth's enchanting hours,  
What hosts of cheerful recollections throng  
Upon my mind and nerve my fainting powers !  
Oh, sound again ! sweet voices ! as before :  
I weep ! — I feel myself a man once more.

*Chorus of Disciples.*

His mission done, the Buried One  
Has gone in peerless pride  
To sit forever on his throne  
By his Great Father's side.  
Alas ! that we, the faithful few,  
To whom he was so dear,  
Are left behind in misery  
To mourn his absence here.

*Chorus of Angels.*

Rejoice! ye sons of men, rejoice!  
 Awake the choral strain!  
 The Saviour, who was crucified,  
 Has broken his death-chain;  
 And ye that follow'd him with love, —  
 If ye devoutly prize  
 The counsels that he gave on earth,  
 Shall meet him in the skies.

## III

## SCENE IN MARTHA'S HOUSE.

## CHARACTERS.

MEPHISTOPHELES.

MARTHA.

MARGARET.

The impression made upon the mind of Faust by the incidents represented in the above scene, as expressed in his reflections, are merely momentary. He is intended as a type of frail humanity, — and as soon as the impulse to good ceases, he relapses at once into his habitual tendency to evil. In the next scene he concludes his compact with the evil Spirit, (here personified under the name of Mephistopheles) agreeably to the popular tradition; and having taken the form of a gay, young cavalier, sets forth, accompanied by the Demon to whom he has sold himself, in quest of adventures. The scene in Martha's house occurs in this part of the play and serves as an introduction to Faust's love for Margaret, which forms the principal subject. Margaret is on a visit to the house of Martha, a married woman, in the neighborhood, whose husband is absent. Mephistopheles introduces himself by pretending to have known her husband abroad, and giving her an account of his supposed death. Faust, before obtaining a personal introduction, had already sent to Margaret through the agency of Mephistopheles, but without informing her from what quarter they came, a present of some valuable jewels to which allusion is made in the dialogue.

*Mephistopheles enters.*

Ladies, excuse me for the liberty

I take in entering thus upon your leisure,

(*bows respectfully to Margaret,*)

— Does mistress Martha Swerdlein live hereby?

*Martha.*

She does, sir, at your service : — what 's your pleasure ?

*Mephistopheles aside to Martha.*

Madam, I had a message to relate ;  
But as you 're now engag'd with company  
Of rank, I 'll call again this evening late,  
If you permit me and the hour agree.

*Martha, aloud to Margaret.*

There, child ! what think you now ? This gentleman  
Just took you for a lady of condition.

*Margaret.*

Oh me ! the gentleman is much too good ;  
I 'm but a poor, young, simple, artless blood :  
These ornaments I wear but by permission.  
The gentleman must really look again.

*Mephistopheles.*

Oh madam ! 'tis the tone, the look, the air,  
That prove your rank, and not the pearls you wear.  
I 'm truly happy that you bid me tarry.

*Martha.*

But let me ask, good sir, this message, pray ?

*Mephistopheles.*

Madam, I cannot say the tale is merry,  
But life is short : we all must have our day.  
Your husband 's dead ; — he bade me bring the news.

*Martha.*

My husband dead ! — the faithful, honest soul !  
Oh, I shall faint.



*Margaret.*

Dear madam, pray take heart.

*Mephistopheles.*

Allow me, madam, to relate the whole.

*Margaret.*

At such a loss as that I could not choose

But weep myself to death.

*Mephistopheles.*

'T is hard to part,

We know; but time brings all extremes together.

Grief turns to joy:—rain follows pleasant weather.

*Martha.*

Where died he then?

*Mephistopheles.*

In Padua he lies.

By Saint Antonio's church, in seemly guise,

A cool, still spot for everlasting rest.

*Martha.*

Pray with this message sent he nought beside?

*Mephistopheles.*

Oh yes! he bade me add his last request,

That, as his soul through purgatory passes,

You'd order for his good three hundred masses,

But left his purse quite empty when he died.

*Martha.*

How?—nothing to help out his soul's release?

Not e'en a keep-sake or a pocket-piece?

What every labouring, handy-working man  
Lays by to leave it to his wife or send it,  
And toils, begs, starves to death, — rather than spend it ?

*Mephistopheles.*

Madam ! it grieves my heart to give you pain ;  
Your husband did not even pay his bills :  
Yet, — to be just, — he suffer'd many ills,  
And of his various faults repented sore :  
Aye, and of his unlucky stars much more.

*Margaret.*

How sad it is men should be so distress'd !  
I'll surely say my prayers for his soul's rest.

*Mephistopheles.*

It is high time, my sweet and pretty maid,  
You had a husband of your own to pray for.

*Margaret.*

Marriage, alas ! sir, this is not the day for.

*Mephistopheles.*

What then ? — a gallant should not be delay'd : —  
A sweetheart that should tell you pretty stories,  
Cheer you by day and keep you warm by night.

*Margaret.*

The people here, sir, think it is not right.

*Mephistopheles.*

Right or not right, they do it when they can.

*Martha.*

But let me know the rest.

*Mephistopheles.*

My dearest madam,

I watch'd beside your dear, departed man  
In his last moments, doing all to glad 'em  
That lay within my power. He suffer'd much,  
But own'd his fate was richly merited.  
I am, he said, a wretch, for leaving such  
A wife at home, alone, dispirited.  
I could have died with some faint hopes of heaven,  
Could I be sure she had forgiven me here.

*Martha weeping.*

Poor, dear, good man ! he was long since forgiven.

*Mephistopheles.*

But she, he added, was more to blame than I.

*Martha.*

He lies ! he lies ! — What ? On his death-bed lie  
So shamelessly ?

*Mephistopheles.*

He stretch'd the truth, I fear,  
At least, if I may judge : — indeed, 'twas clear.  
I did not want, said he, for occupation :  
House-work of all sorts was an endless task :  
Do what I could my wife was never easy.  
And then to feed her was an operation,  
Almost as hard ; her stomach was not queasy :  
I could not give so fast as she could ask.  
But this was nothing ; had I been allow'd  
To eat my share in peace, and quietly  
I could have borne the rest ; but daily, — nightly, —  
'Twas one continual scolding, long and loud ;  
Until one day I thought it best to quit her.

*Martha.*

The wretch! — the villain! — could he so forget her, —  
Abuse her so? — the wife he lov'd before?

*Mephistopheles.*

At other times he felt your absence more;  
He told me this. — When we from Malta sail'd,  
I for my wife and children pray'd sincerely;  
And Providence my constancy rewarded;  
For, on our voyage as we proceeded cheerly,  
Forthwith a Turkish packet-ship we hail'd,  
Which, instantly, *sans cérémonie*, we boarded  
And took: 'twas laden with a most rich treasure  
For the Grand Signior; and, I say it with pleasure,  
I had my share or more: — perhaps 'twas merited.

*Martha.*

Where is 't? — what came on 't? Has he buried it?

*Mephistopheles.*

Light come, light go. — God knows with whom he spent it;  
But this he said. — When I to Naples came  
There took a fancy to me a fair, young dame,  
I being alone, of wife and friends bereft,  
And much she cherish'd, much befriended me,  
In a most loving guise, — howe'er she meant it; —  
But of my cash so largely she expended me,  
That in the end I had not a farthing left.

*Martha.*

Oh the vile thief! — What? waste upon a woman,  
Off in the moon, his hard-earn'd family stores?  
Rob his own wife to pamper up a common —

*Mephistopheles.*

Well! well! the poor man's dead: that pays all scores.  
You'll put on weeds to wear a week or two;  
But give me leave to say, that were I you,  
I'd lose no time in tying the knot again.

*Martha.*

Alas! my dear sir! I should seek in vain  
A treasure like the first: so good a creature! —  
He had his faults; — was much too great a rover; —  
Drank hard; — to naughty women sadly given; —  
Of cards and dice a most intemperate lover:

*Mephistopheles.*

Well! well! and he, — to keep the balance even, —  
No doubt o'erlook'd some petty peccadilloes,  
And so you worried along for worse or better.  
But, madam, when you're tir'd of wearing willows,  
I'd gladly change myself a ring with you.

*Martha.*

The gentleman is pleas'd to be facetious.

*Mephistopheles (aside.)*

I must be off, and that in season too;  
She'd force the devil himself to keep his word.

*( To Margaret.)*

How stands your heart, my love?

*Margaret.*

What are your wishes?

*Mephistopheles — (aside.)*

Innocent thing! she never yet has heard  
She has a heart. — *( To the ladies )* —

Fair ladies both, good night!

*Martha.*

But, sir, before you go, I fain would ask  
What proof you have of this sad visitation ?  
To make it public is a mournful task ; —  
But yet to read his death in black and white  
Would be, methinks, some little consolation.

*Mephistopheles.*

Madam, two witnesses will be enough :  
I have a friend to join me in the proof,  
And, if you please, will bring him here.

*Martha.*

Pray do.

*Mephistopheles.*

The young lady, I hope, will stop and see him too.  
A fine, young gallant ! — he has travell'd much,  
Is passionately devoted to the ladies.

*Margaret.*

Oh sir ! I'm not fit company for such.

*Mephistopheles.*

For any body on earth, whate'er his trade is.

*Martha.*

Then, sir, this evening we shall look for you  
At the summer-house in the garden here below.  
(*Exit Mephistopheles.*)

## THE WORTH OF WOMAN.

FROM THE GERMAN OF SCHILLER.

[Democratic Review, October, 1857.]

HONOR'D be woman ! she beams on the sight,  
Graceful and fair, like a being of light ;  
Scatters around her, wherever she strays,  
Roses of bliss o'er our thorn-cover'd ways ;  
Roses of Paradise, sent from above,  
To be gather'd and twin'd in a garland of love.

Man on Passion's stormy ocean,  
Toss'd by surges mountains high,  
Courts the hurricane commotion,  
Spurns at reason's feeble cry.  
Loud the tempest roars around him,  
Wilder still it wars within ;  
Flashing lights of hope confound him,  
Stuns him life's incessant din.

Woman invites him with bliss in her smile,  
To cease from his toil and be happy awhile ;  
Whispering wooingly, come to my bower !  
Go not in search of the phantom of power !  
Honor and wealth are illusory ; come !  
Happiness dwells in the temple of home.

Man, with fury stern and savage,  
Persecutes his brother man ;  
Reckless if he bless or ravage,  
Action, action, still his plan.  
Now creating, now destroying,  
Ceaseless wishes tear his breast,  
Ever seeking, ne'er enjoying,  
Still to be, but never blest.

Woman contented in silent repose,  
Enjoys in its beauty life's flower as it blows,  
And waters and tends it with innocent heart ;  
Far richer than man with his treasures of art,  
And wiser by far, in her circle confin'd,  
Than he with his science, and flights of the mind.

Coldly to himself sufficing,  
Man disdains the gentler arts,  
Knoweth not the bliss arising  
From the interchange of hearts ;  
Slowly through his bosom stealing  
Flows the genial current on,  
Till, by age's frost congealing,  
It is harden'd into stone.

She, like the harp that instinctively rings,  
As the night-breathing zephyr soft sighs on the strings,  
Responds to each impulse with ready reply,  
Whether sorrow or pleasure her sympathy try ;  
And tear-drops and smiles on her countenance play,  
Like the sunshine and showers of a morning in May.

Through the range of man's dominion,  
Terror is the ruling word ;  
And the standard of opinion  
Is the temper of the sword



Strife exults, and Pity blushing,  
From the scene despairing flies,  
Where to battle madly rushing,  
Brother upon brother dies.

Woman commands with a milder control,  
She rules by enchantment the realm of the soul;  
As she glances around in the light of her smile,  
The war of the passions is hush'd for a while,  
And discord, content from his fury to cease,  
Reposes entranc'd on the pillow of peace.

## THE SPECTRE BRIDEGROOM.

IMITATED FROM THE GERMAN OF BUEERGER.

[Democratic Review, June, 1843.]

BUEERGER's *Lenora* is acknowledged, by all who are familiar with German poetry, to be the masterpiece of ballads. No composition of the kind in German, or perhaps any other language, can be compared with it for effect. It is rather remarkable that the works of a poet who was capable of producing it, should be so scanty, and generally of so little value. With the exception of the *Wild Huntsman* (*Wilde Jaeger*), another ballad of great power, though not equal to the *Lenora*, the contents of his little volume are almost wholly destitute of interest.

There is a fine translation of the *Wild Huntsman* by Sir Walter Scott. The *Lenora* has been several times attempted, but without much success. The poem, which is published in Sir Walter's works under the title of *William and Helen*, though founded upon that of Bueerger, can hardly be said with propriety to be a translation, or even an imitation of it. It was written by Scott after having heard a friend relate the substance of the ballad, as he had heard it read by a lady in the translation of Mr. Taylor, at the house of Dugald Stewart. That, with so little knowledge of the original, Scott should have approached it so nearly as he did in *William and Helen*, is a fact which does credit to his memory as well as to that of his *relator*. There are, however, great deviations, not only in the language, but in the narrative; and the poem, in general, has very little merit.

Among other alterations, Sir Walter has changed the time to that of the Crusades, and the scene from the common walks of life to those of knight-hood and romance. This change, as Mr. J. Q. Adams has justly remarked in a letter to the late Dr. Follen, injures the effect. It was a part of the author's plan to give an air of reality to his wild machinery, by placing it among ordinary characters and incidents. For the same reason he makes the language, which is exceedingly bold, striking and poetical, at the same time colloquial and familiar. I have attempted to combine the same characteristics, and also to bring out more distinctly than is done in some of the other translations, the sneering, Mephistopheles tone of the spectre.

## I.

At the first sight of dawning light  
Lenora left her bed :  
" Oh William ! William ! art thou false  
To me, or art thou dead ? "  
The youth had gone with Frederic's bands  
To fight in far Bohemian lands,  
And ne'er had written home, to tell  
His love if he were sick or well.

## II.

At length, the king and empress queen,  
Quite surfeited with strife,  
Resolv'd to make their quarrel up,  
And lead a quiet life ;  
And both the armies, gaily drest  
In garlands green and all their best,  
With bugles braying, beat of drum,  
And flying colors, hurried home.

## III.

And wheresoe'er they took their way,  
To meet the joyous rout,  
Forth came the people one and all,  
From every village out.  
" Thank God ! " each grateful mother cried ;  
" Thrice welcome, dearest ! " many a bride ;  
A happy meeting seem'd in store  
For all, except the poor Lenore.

## IV.

As on they journey'd, troop by troop,  
She sought through all the train  
And question'd each, " Is William here ? "  
And question'd all in vain.

When now the long parade was o'er,  
She storm'd, and wept, and wildly tore  
Her raven tresses, till the curls  
Were scatter'd like a crazy girl's.

## V.

Her mother clasp'd her in her arms,  
And kiss'd her o'er and o'er —  
"The Lord have mercy on thee, child!  
What ails my poor Lenore?"  
"Oh mother! mother! woe is me!  
Oh day of blackest misery!  
My love is lost; my life is o'er;  
God has no mercy for Lenore!"

## VI.

"Nay, dearest daughter! say not so,  
But rather pray for grace:  
The ways of God are always just,  
And full of tenderness."  
"No, mother! no: they are not so:  
His ways to me are wrath and wo:  
The many prayers I pray'd before,  
Were all in vain,— I'll pray no more!"

## VII.

"Oh, dearest child! thy talk is wild,  
And thou art mad with grief;  
Partake the blessed sacrament,  
And that will bring relief."  
"No, mother! no: it will not so:  
No sacrament will cure my wo,  
Unless the sacramental bread  
Could raise my William from the dead."

## VIII.

"Nay, listen, child ! perhaps beguil'd  
By some bright Magyar dame,  
Thy faithless spouse has broke his vows  
And found another flame.  
Then let him go, the treacherous friend !  
He'll rue his falsehood in the end :  
Tormented for his base desires  
Hereafter in eternal fires !"

## IX.

"Oh, mother dear ! he is not here !  
Oh most unhappy morn !  
Would God that I were in the grave !  
That I had ne'er been born !  
Oh, would to God that I could be  
At once put out of misery,  
And never see the day-light more :  
God has no mercy for Lenore !"

## X.

"Oh, gracious Father ! do not heed  
The poor unhappy thing !  
Her senses have deserted her :  
She's mad with suffering !  
Dear child ! forget these earthly ties,  
And think of God and paradise :  
That thus the blessed Lord may be  
Thy spouse through all eternity."

## XI.

"Oh, what care I for future bliss ?  
'Tis all an idle dream !  
'Tis paradise where William is,  
And hell away from him !

Oh, would to God that I could be  
At once put out of misery,  
And never see the day-light more !  
God has no mercy for Lenore !"

## XII.

Thus in her transports of despair,  
She ventur'd to deny  
The Almighty goodness, and condemn  
The ways of the Most High ;  
Continuing still to rage and moan  
All day, until the sun went down,  
And night, with starry gems besrent,  
Rode darkling up the firmament.

## XIII.

When hark ! a horsenian, tramp ! tramp ! tramp !  
Comes prancing to the door,  
And straight alights, with jingling stamp,  
Upon the step before.  
The door-bell next, with gentle ring,  
Is softly sounded, kling-ling-ling,  
And, through the passage clearly heard,  
Thus spoke the horsenian, word for word :

## XIV.

" What ho ! what ho ! unlock the door !  
Ho ! lady bright ! awake !  
Art fast asleep, or dost thou watch  
And weep for William's sake ? "  
" Ah, William ! thou ? so late at night :  
I've watch'd and wept since morning light ?  
But tell me, dearest ! whence you come,  
Alone, at midnight, travelling home."

## XV.

" We mount for flight, at dead of night ;  
Our coursers fleet and black ;  
I come from far Bohemian lands,  
And take you with me back."  
" Nay, William, rest, at least till morn !  
The wind blows wildly through the thorn ;  
Come ! rest thee from its loud alarms  
Till morning in thy true love's arms."

## XVI.

" Blow high or low ! blow sleet or snow !  
Blow tempest, rack or rain !  
My steed is dight ; my time is night :  
I must not here remain.  
Come ! hurry ! hurry ! don your sack,  
And jump upon my charger's back !  
We have to ride, my lady bright,  
At least a hundred leagues to-night."

## XVII.

" What, William ! — ride a hundred leagues  
Before the crow of cock ?  
Already by our village chimes  
'Tis past eleven o'clock ?"  
" Past fiddle-stick ! — why let it strike !  
We ride, I tell you, spectre-like !  
I'll bring thee, sweetheart, — never dread ! —  
By morning to our marriage bed."

## XVIII.

" Sweet William, say ! — this marriage bed ! —  
What is it you intend ?"  
" Six boards in length, and one short piece  
Across at either end."

" So little room ? " — " Enough for both ! —  
Come, jump upon my saddle-cloth !  
The wedding party is prepar'd,  
And our bed-chamber nicely aired."

## XIX.

Up sprang that lovely maiden then  
Upon the steed behind,  
And closely in her snowy arms  
The darling rider twin'd.  
Then off they go: hurra! hurra!  
'Tis gallop! gallop! all the way!  
The horse and horseman pant for breath;  
The pavement sparkles underneath.

## XX.

On either side, as on they ride,  
Away the houses fly;  
The bridges thunder under foot,  
The moon is bright on high.  
" Art frighten'd, love? — Down dale! up dike!  
Hurra! we go it, spectre-like!  
Dost fear the spectres, sweetheart?" " No!  
But, dearest William, talk not so!"

## XXI.

What sound is there upon the air:  
The crows are on the wing;  
The passing bell tolls out a knell,  
And, lo! the mourners bring  
A coffin plac'd upon a hearse,  
And chant a sort of funeral verse,  
Much like the wolf's terrific howl,  
Or shrieking of the midnight owl.



## XXII.

"Enough ! enough of this vile stuff !  
I've other sport in quest !  
I wed to-night my lady bright,  
And bid ye to the feast.  
Come, Chorister ! with all your throng,  
And warble us the wedding song !  
Come on, Sir Parson ! we shall need  
A blessing for our marriage bed."

## XXIII.

The chant is done ; — the bier is gone,  
And, at the horseman's call,  
Procession, Parson, Chorister,  
They follow, one and all.  
Again away ! hurra ! hurra !  
'Tis gallop ! gallop ! all the way !  
The horse and horseman pant for breath ;  
The pavement sparkles underneath.

## XXIV.

On either side, as on they ride,  
The hills, and everything,  
Trees, houses, cities, villages,  
Are all upon the wing.  
" Art frighten'd, love ? — Down dale ! up dike !  
Hurra ! we go it, spectre-like !  
Dost fear the spectres, sweetheart ? " " No !  
But, dearest William ! talk not so ! "

## XXV.

" Stay ! stay ! I see the gallows tree ;  
And footing it about,  
Half out of sight, by the moonlight,  
An airy rabble rout.

What ho ! you rabble ! here ! come here !  
 You rabble ! to the wedding cheer !  
 And show us, as we change our rings,  
 Your pirouettes and pigeon-wings."

## XXVI.

The dance is up ; the rabble troop  
 Come after with a rush :  
 Like whistling breeze through thick pine-trees,  
 Or through the hazel-bush.  
 Once more away ! hurra ! hurra !  
 'Tis gallop ! gallop ! all the way !  
 The horse and horseman pant for breath ;  
 The pavement sparkles underneath.

## XXVII.

As on they ride, on either side,  
 The world is hurrying past ;  
 Moon, stars, and planets in the sky,  
 Are hurrying on as fast.  
 " Art frighten'd, love ? — Down dale ! up dike !  
 Hurra ! we go it, spectre-like !  
 Dost fear the spectres sweetheart ? " " No !  
 But, dearest William ! talk not so !"

## XXVIII.

" What ho ! what ho ! the roosters crow ! —  
 We 've had a pretty chase !  
 Your work is sped, my gallant steed !  
 For we are at the place.  
 'Tis time ; I scent the morning air ;  
 The wedding company is there ;  
 And all is ready for the show ;  
 Come on, my charger ! in we go."

## XXIX.

A lofty gate of iron grate  
Athwart the passage rose :  
At his whip-stroke back springs the lock,  
Away the cross-bar goes ;  
The church-yard portals open wide,  
And, helter-skelter ! in they ride ;  
The horse's hoofs, in tramping on,  
Struck fire from many a burial-stone.

## XXX.

Look ! look ! what now ? A pretty show !  
What miracle is this ?  
See ! see ! the horseman's drapery  
Is falling piece by piece !  
Off go at once his flesh and hair !  
His skull and all his bones are bare !  
A naked skeleton he stands,  
With scythe and hour-glass in his hands.

## XXXI.

Uprears the horse with wildest force,  
And snorts a fiery stream ;  
Then wheeling round sinks in the ground  
Directly under them.  
There's howling in the upper spheres !  
There's wailing from the sepulchres !  
Till poor Lenora well may doubt,  
If she be in the flesh or out.

## XXXII.

Around her then the spectre train  
A ghostly dance prolong,  
And capering in airy ring,  
They howl a parting song :

" Be patient, though your heart should break !  
And never, never undertake  
God's holy purpose to control :  
The Lord have mercy on your soul !"

## THE WATER KING,

A LEGEND FROM THE NORSE.

[*Democratic Review*, May, 1843.]

["Two little boys were playing by the side of a river and they saw the Ström Karl, or Water Spirit, sitting on the shore and playing on his harp. Then the children called out to him, and said, 'Ström Karl, why do you sit here playing? there is no salvation for you.' Whereupon the Ström Karl fell to weeping bitterly, threw his harp away, and sunk in the deep waters. When the boys returned home, they related to their father, who was a godly man, what had befallen them. The father said, 'You have sinned against the Ström Karl. Go back and comfort him, and tell him that he too shall be saved.' When they went back to the river, the Ström Karl sate on the shore, weeping and lamenting. And the children said, 'Weep not so, Ström Karl! our Father says that thy Redeemer also liveth.' Then the Ström Karl joyfully took his harp and played sweetly until sunset."]

Another slightly different version of this pretty legend is given in Miss Bremer's admirable novel, *The Neighbors*. The Spirit is there called Neck.]

Two boys beside a river play'd  
At eve's retiring light,  
And there, beneath the alder shade,  
They saw the Water-Sprite.

He sate beneath the alder shade,  
The wayward Water-King,  
And deftly on his harp he play'd,  
And sweetly did he sing.

Long time the boys attentive heard  
The harp's melodious strain,  
While not a breeze the river stirr'd  
Or breath'd across the plain.

At length the elder thus address'd  
The Spirit of the stream :  
" We know you never can be bless'd,  
For as joyful as you seem."

Oh ! then the Spirit ceased to play,  
For alter'd was his mood,  
And he threw his harp at once away,  
And leap'd into the flood.

And the two boys return'd at night,  
And to their father said,  
How they had seen the Water-Sprite,  
As on his harp he play'd ;

And how they told him that in spite  
Of his sweet melodies,  
They knew that such a wayward sprite  
Might never hope for bliss.

And how the Spirit ceas'd to play  
When thus they spoke to him,  
And threw his lyre at once away,  
And leap'd into the stream.

This answer then the father gave,  
" Dear boys ! ye said not right :  
God's grace is rich enough to save  
A wayward Water-Sprite."

Again the boys at evening play'd  
Beside the flowing spring,  
And saw again beneath the shade  
The wayward Water-King.

He sate beneath the alder shade  
In melancholy guise,  
No more upon his harp he play'd  
And tears were in his eyes.

Again the elder brother spake,  
To break the mournful spell,  
"Nay weep not thus, unhappy Neck!  
For all may yet be well.

"Our father says that what before  
We told you, was not right:  
For God has grace enough in store  
To save a Water-Sprite."

Up sprang the joyful Spirit then,  
As waking from a dream,  
And took his golden lyre again  
That lay beside the stream.

And long the boys delighted heard  
The glad, unearthly sound,  
While not a breeze the river stirr'd  
And silence slept around.

## THE PORTRESS.

A BALLAD.

[Democratic Review, April, 1844.]

L'ENVOI.

To M. L.

FAIR Saint! who, in thy brightest day  
 Of life's meridian joys,  
 Hast turn'd thy serious thoughts away  
 From fashion's fleeting toys,  
 And fasten'd them with lofty view  
 Upon the Only Good and True,  
 Come, listen to me while I tell  
 A tale of holy miracle!

Come! fly with me on fancy's wing  
 To that far, sea-girt strand,  
 The clime of sunshine, love, and spring,  
 Thy favorite Spanish land!  
 And lo! before our curious eyes  
 An ancient city's turrets rise,  
 And circled by its moss-grown wall,  
 There stands a vast, baronial hall.

And opposite, a convent pile  
 Its massy structure rears,  
 And in the chapel's vaulted aisle  
 A holy shrine appears:



And at the shrine devoutly bent,  
There kneels a lovely penitent,  
In sable vesture, sadly fair,  
Come! listen with me to her prayer!

## BALLAD.

"Blest shrines! from which in evil hour  
My erring footsteps stray'd,  
Oh! grant your kind protecting power  
To a repentant maid!  
Sweet Virgin! if in other days  
I sang thee hymns of love and praise,  
And plaited garlands for thy brow,  
Oh! listen to thy votary now!

"The robe, in which thy form is drest,  
These patient fingers wrought;  
The flowers that bloom upon thy breast  
With loving zeal I brought;  
That holy cross, of diamond clear,  
I often wash'd with many a tear,  
And dried again in pious bliss,  
Sweet Virgin! with a burning kiss.

"And when by cruel arts betray'd,  
My wayward course began,  
And I forsook thy holy shade,  
With that false-hearted man,  
I breath'd to thee my parting prayer,  
And gave me to thy gentle care,  
Sweet Virgin! hear thy votary's vow,  
And grant her thy protection now!"

Unhappy Margaret ! she had been  
The fairest and the best,  
In pious zeal and modest mein  
Outshining all the rest ;  
And was so diligent withal,  
That she had won the trust of all,  
And by superior order sate  
As Portress at the convent gate.

And well she watch'd that entrance o'er ; —  
Ah ! had she known the art  
To guard as faithfully the door  
Of her own virgin heart.  
But when the glozing tempter came  
With honied words of sin and shame,  
She broke her order's sacred bands  
And follow'd him to distant lands.

And there, in that delicious clime  
Of song, romance and flowers,  
While guilty love was in its prime,  
They dream'd away the hours :  
But soon possession's touch of snow  
Subdued his passion's fiery glow,  
Converting love to scorn and hate,  
And he has left her desolate.

And she from Madrid's courtly bowers  
A weary way has gone,  
To seek in old Palencia's towers  
False-hearted Alarcon.  
His hall is vacant : not a beam  
Is from the windows seen to gleam,  
Nor sound of life is heard to pour  
From balcony or open door.

But lo ! where in the cool moonlight,  
Her home of former years,  
The well-known convent opposite  
Its massy structure rears :  
And open stands the chapel door,  
Saying with mute language to the poor,  
The heavy-laden and distressed,  
“ Come in ! and I will give you rest ! ”

And she has enter'd, and has knelt  
Before the blessed shrine,  
And stealing o'er her senses felt  
An influence divine.  
And the false world's corrupt control  
No more can subjugate her soul,  
Where thoughts of innocence again  
With undivided empire reign.

Again she sees her quiet cell,  
And the trim garden there ;  
Again she hears the matin bell,  
That summons her to prayer :  
Again she joins in chorus high  
The strain of midnight minstrelsy,  
That lifts her with each thrilling tone,  
In transport to the eternal throne.

“ Ah ! who will give me back ? ” she said,  
With hotly-gushing tears,  
“ The blameless heart, the guiltless head  
Of my departed years ?  
What heavenly power can turn aside  
The course of time's unchanging tide,  
And make the Penitent again  
The Pure One, that she might have been ? ”

While musing thus, around the dome  
She casts a vacant glance ;  
She sees, emerging from the gloom,  
A graceful form advance.  
Proceeding forth with noiseless feet,  
From a far chapel's dim retreat,  
The figure, clad in nun's array,  
Along the pavement took her way.

A lantern in her hand she bore,  
The shade upon her face ;  
And Margaret vainly scann'd it o'er,  
Familiar lines to trace ;  
Then murmur'd, fearing to intrude,  
" She is not of the sisterhood :  
Perhaps a novice, who has come,  
Since Margaret left her convent home."

From shrine to shrine with measur'd pace,  
The figure went in turn,  
And plac'd the flowers, and trimm'd the dress,  
And made the tapers burn :  
Nor ever rested to look back :  
And Margaret follow'd in her track,  
Though far behind : a charm unknown  
With secret impulse led her on.

Fair sight it was, I ween, but dread  
And strange as well as fair,  
To see how as she visited  
Each separate altar there,  
A wondrous flame around it play'd,  
So soft it scarcely broke the shade,  
But glow'd with lustre cold and white,  
Like fleecy clouds of Boreal Light.

Save only where around the Nun  
A warmer blaze it threw ;  
For there the bright suffusion shone  
With tints of various hue ;  
Pale azure, clear as seraph's eyes,  
Mix'd with the rose's blushing dyes,  
And gathering to a halo, spread  
In rainbow circles round her head.

And every flower her touch beneath  
Renew'd its former bloom,  
And from its bell of odorous breath,  
Sent forth a sweet perfume ;  
And though no voice the silence stirr'd,  
A low, sweet melody was heard,  
That fell in tones subdued but clear,  
Like heavenly music on the ear.

Entranc'd in ecstasies of awe  
And joy that none can tell,  
The Penitent at distance saw  
The beauteous miracle ;  
And scarce can trust the evidence  
That pours in floods through every sense ;  
And thinks, so strange the vision seems,  
That she is in the land of dreams.

At length, each altar duly dight  
And all her labors o'er,  
The wondrous Nun resum'd the light,  
And cross'd the minster floor ;  
Returning to the chapel shade,  
From which her entrance she had made,  
Along the aisle where Margaret stood,  
And passing, brush'd the maiden's hood.

Then she the stranger's mantle caught,  
And something she would say,  
But on her lips the unutter'd thought  
In silence died away,  
"What would'st thou with me, gentle one?"  
In sweetest tones inquir'd the Nun.  
Poor Margaret still no language found,  
But gaz'd intently on the ground.

"Say, then, who art thou?" At her side  
Pursued the form divine,  
"My name is Margaret." She replied,  
"It is the same with mine."  
"Thy office, maiden?" "Lady dear!  
For years I was a sister here;  
And by superior order sate  
As Portress at the convent gate."

"I too," the Nun replied, "as one  
Among the sisters wait,  
And am to all the convent known,  
As Portress at the gate."  
Then first, entranc'd in wild amaze,  
Her downcast eyes did Margaret raise,  
And fix them earnestly upon  
The stranger's face; — *it was her own!*

Reflected in that glorious Nun,  
She sees herself appear:  
The air, the lineaments, her own,  
In form and character:  
The dress the same that she has worn;  
The keys the same that she has borne;  
Herself in person, habit, name,  
At once another and the same.

Struck down with speechless ecstasy,  
Astonish'd Margaret fell :  
" Rise ! " spake the vision, " I am she,  
Whom thou hast serv'd so well ;  
And when thou forfeitedst thy vows,  
To be a perjurd traitor's spouse,  
And mad'st to me thy parting prayer  
For my protecting love and care :

" I heard and granted thy request,  
And to conceal thy shame,  
I left the mansion of the blest  
And took thy humble name,  
Thy features, person, office, dress ;  
And did the duty of thy place,  
And daily made report of all  
In order to the Principal.

" Behold ! where still at every shrine  
The votive taper stands ;  
The dress that once thou wor'st is thine,  
The keys are in thy hands :  
Thy fame is clear, thy trial o'er :  
Then, gentle maiden ! sin no more !  
And think on her, who faithfully  
In hours of danger thought on thee ! "

A lightning flash ! — a thunder peal ! —  
And parting o'er their heads,  
The church's vaulted pinnacle  
An ample passage spreads ;  
And lo ! descending angels come  
To guard their queen in triumph home,  
The while the echoing minster rings  
With sweetest notes from heavenly strings.

Then up, on cherub pinions borne,  
The Virgin-Mother pass'd ;  
And as she rose, on the Forlorn,  
A radiant smile she cast ;  
And Margaret saw, with streaming eyes  
Of grateful joy, the vision rise,  
And watch'd it till, from earthly view,  
It vanish'd in the depths of blue.



## THE MAID OF OBERLAND.

A BALLAD.

"The baths which the Parisians frequent the most willingly in Switzerland, are those of Kerchenbach, near the lake of Brienz. The Lake of Brienz, that pearl of Oberland, has not yet a steamboat, but it has lost its most graceful ornament. There was for some years, they cite, in all Switzerland, as one of the marvels of the country, the beautiful boatwoman of Brienz, and who knows how many romantic stories they relate of this queen of the lake; what passions she enkindled; how many travelers wished to have as relic and souvenir a ringlet of her hair or the riband of her girdle? But the boatwoman was virtue itself, and alone in the midst of the lake, with the most devoted passenger, this daughter of Helvetia, an oar in each hand, set at defiance the perils of a *tête-à-tête*.

"There was, they say, a young lord who proposed to marry her, absolutely, as if she had been a noble heiress, or a dancer of Drury Lane; but she wished not to become a lady. Then the young lord proposed to become a boatman, if she would, on that condition, take him for a husband; and having experienced a second refusal, he blew his brains out in the boat conducted by the lovely boatwoman."

A SKIFF is on the mountain lake  
Of lovely Oberland,  
And in it sits a beauteous maid,  
An oar in either hand:  
And by her side in stately pride  
A noble British peer,  
And she must row the little skiff  
And he must sit and steer.

As when the day its dawning ray  
O'er clouds of silver throws,  
So through that maiden's blushing cheek,  
The soft carnation glows.  
Serene but fearless is her eye,  
The gentle girl of Brence,  
And o'er her face is spread the grace  
Of purest innocence.

And evermore she plies the oar,  
And oft in sportive glee  
Her notes awake the quiet lake  
With simple melody.  
"I would not be a city belle  
Or dame of high degree,  
My little bark is my domain,  
An ample one for me.

"The lark shall rouse me at the dawn,  
Upsoaring through the sky,  
The ripple of my own dear lake  
Shall be my lullaby.  
I covet not a prouder lot  
For I am fancy-free,  
And reign within my own domain:  
A little bark for me."

So fair that beauteous vision rose  
Upon the Briton's eye,  
So sweetly fell upon his ear  
That simple minstrelsy,  
That his fond heart for death or life  
A spell of love came o'er,  
And she must be his wedded wife  
Or he must be no more.

" Oh come ! sweet maid of Oberland ! "

Thus spake that noble peer,

" The oar is not for thy soft hand, "

Nor suits it mine to steer.

Then leave thy oar upon the shore,

Thy bark beside the strand,

And come with me to part no more

To my far British land.

" Fair lawns are mine beside the Tyne,

With forest, town, and tower,

My city home a stately dome

Upon the Thames's shore.

Come with me there and thou shalt bear

My high ancestral names,

Thy spouse an Earl, and thou the pearl

Of England's noble dames."

" Nay gallant youth ! thy phrase is sooth

But suiteth not my ear,

For thou must wed another maid

And I must tarry here.

The Switzer girl and British earl

May never fitly pair,

And I should shame the noble name

That thou would'st have me bear."

" Nay, maiden dear," return'd the Peer,

" If such be thy design,

And if thou dare not meet me there,

I'll make my home of thine ;

And I will quit my lordly seat,

My forest, town and tower ;

And I will quit my stately home

Upon the Thames's shore ;

" And I will take for thy dear sake  
    An oar in either hand,  
And be a boatman on the lake  
    Of lovely Oberland ;  
And at the bow I'll sit and row,  
    A joyful gondolier,  
And thou beside me at the stern,  
    Shalt gaily sing and steer."

" Thy speech is vain," replied again  
    That maiden sweet and fair,  
" The Switzer girl and British earl  
    May never fitly pair.  
The Eagle nestles on the cliff,  
    The Dove upon the lea ;  
And thou must leave my little skiff  
    And think no more of me."

A blight came o'er that Briton's brain  
    Of dark death-doing thrall : —  
" And if I must not live for thee,  
    I may not live at all.  
I'll go to rest this troubled breast  
    Where Thought may never wake ; —"  
And overboard upon the word  
    He leap'd into the lake.

One cry through that lone valley rang  
    Of horror wild and shrill ;  
It echoed from the mountain side,  
    And all again was still.  
One ripple stirr'd the shining glass  
    Of that clear watery plain ;  
It sunk into the liquid mass  
    And all was smooth again.

The sky is blue above the lake,  
Green are its grassy sides,  
And gracefully the little skiff  
Upon its bosom rides.  
And there in calmest innocence,  
An oar in either hand,  
Is seen the gentle maid of Brence,  
The pearl of Oberland.

And evermore she plies the oar,  
And oft in sportive glee,  
Her notes awake the mountain lake  
With simple melody.  
"I would not be a city belle,  
Or dame of high degree,  
My little bark is my domain  
An ample one for me.

"The lark shall rouse me at the dawn  
Upsoaring through the sky;  
The ripple of my own dear lake  
Shall be my lullaby.  
I covet not a prouder lot,  
A maiden fancy-free,  
I reign within my own domain,  
A little bark for me."

## THE FIFTH OF MAY.

IMITATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF MANZONI.

(Boston Miscellany, November, 1842.)

## I.

HE too reposes from his toil :  
 The giant mind has fled ;  
 And motionless the mortal coil  
 Upon the earth is laid.  
 Methinks, that, at a blow so rude,  
 Earth's self a moment must have stood,  
 As motionless and mute ;  
 Reflecting on the fatal hour  
 Of him who sway'd so vast a power,  
 And doubting if the foot  
 Of one so great would ever place  
 Its track again upon her face.

## II.

I saw him, thron'd in glory, reign  
 In his refulgent hall :  
 I saw him sink, — ascend again, —  
 And then forever fall.  
 I flatter'd not his hour of state,  
 Nor meanly mock'd his adverse fate :  
 But o'er his funeral urn  
 I come to chant a mournful song,  
 On which, perhaps, the curious throng  
 A passing glance may turn,  
 When future centuries shall cast  
 Their eyes on the recorded Past.

## III.

From Egypt's flood to St. Bernard,  
From Madrid to the Don,  
His crashing thunderbolts were heard,  
His lightning terrors shone.  
From North to South, from sea to sea,  
His very name was victory.

Was this the true renown?  
Let other times the question scan!  
We humbly bow before the plan  
Of that Most Holy One,  
Who deign'd so copiously to shower  
Upon his head the gift of power.

## IV.

The joy of wild Ambition's dream,  
Its inly-gnawing care  
Were his; and his the last extreme  
Of good and ill to share:  
Success, by danger made more sweet,  
Dominion, glory, base defeat,  
The palace and the jail:  
Twice master of the subject world,  
And twice in fury headlong hurl'd  
From that proud pinnacle  
By fortune's whelming thundergust,  
To grovel in the common dust.

## V.

Two worlds, — the men of Yesterday  
And of To-morrow, — stood,  
Engag'd for years in furious fray,  
Drench'd in each other's blood.  
He wav'd his hand, and all was peace;

He bade the stern contention cease,  
And then he pass'd away :  
But still in ruin always great,  
The mark of boundless love and hate  
And reverence and dismay  
And pity ; — on his distant rock  
Mankind's perpetual gazing-stock.

## VI.

How oft ; — as some poor shipwreck'd man,  
Mid ocean's raging swell,  
With straining eyeballs tries to scan  
The life-preserving sail ; —  
He trac'd in vain that rock-bound coast,  
And when he knew that all was lost,  
What shades of black despair  
In horror o'er his spirit fell !  
How oft in Memory's bitter well  
He strove to drown his care,  
And still at every fresh design  
Left incomplete the attempted line !

## VII.

How often, — as with downcast eyes  
And folded arms he stood,  
When sunset stain'd with golden dyes  
The vast Atlantic flood : —  
Before his thought would Fancy raise  
A dream of other glorious days,  
Of tents extending fair,  
The flashing steel, the countless host,  
The glittering banners, wildly tost  
Upon the troubled air,  
The vollied charge, — the maddening cry  
Of onset and of victory !



## VIII.

Ah ! then he felt his fatal lapse  
From that resplendent show  
To his rock-prison, and, perhaps,  
Had sunk beneath the blow : —  
But from above into his soul  
A gracious voice of comfort stole,  
And told him of the bliss  
Of other worlds, by Heaven design'd  
To welcome the Immortal Mind,  
That takes its leave of this ; —  
Bright worlds, beside whose beaming face  
Our glories are but nothingness.

## IX.

Faith, — saving Faith, — the ever-blest,  
Upon the record-roll  
Of her achievements then impress'd  
The noblest of the whole :  
For never yet did prouder knee,  
Before the *Man of Cavalry*  
In homage touch the sod.  
Then breathe not o'er his lowly tomb  
A lisp of hate or wrath to come,  
But leave him to his God,  
Who deign'd a holy calm to shed  
Upon the soldier's dying bed.

## ENIGMA.

[Democratic Review, October, 1837.]

THE lightest and the softest thing  
That floats upon the zephyr's wing,  
I move, with unresisting ease,  
Before the breath of every breeze.

With power resistless and sublime,  
I sweep along from clime to clime,  
And I defy all earthly force  
To intercept me in my course.

A favorite guest with all the fair,  
I play with Beauty's twisted hair ;  
And harmless as the gentle dove,  
I share the couch of happy love.

'Tis mine to hurl the bolts of fate,  
That overwhelm the guilty great ;  
I wield the giant arm that brings  
Dismay and death on tyrant kings.

No throb of passion ever press'd  
The vacant chambers of my breast ;  
And no desire nor dream of care  
Could ever gain admittance there.

With passion's various fires I burn ;  
And all, as each prevails in turn,  
With equal rage incessant roll  
Their boiling currents through my soul.

In Folly's lap I had my birth,  
The simplest creature on the earth ;  
At Folly's bosom I was nurs'd,  
And am as simple as at first.

The wisest own that I am wiser,  
And sages make me their adviser ;  
The great demand my prudent cares,  
To aid them in their state affairs.

I boast but little outward grace,  
For frequent stains deform my face ;  
And when I bathe, though strange it seems,  
I seek from choice the foulest streams.

I soar to fields of liquid light,  
Where rainbows glow and stars are bright ;  
I sun me at their spotless fires,  
And sport amid the heavenly choirs

The nameless being of a day,  
I barely am, and pass away ;  
Nor leave a trace behind, to be  
The record of my history.

No chance or change has power enough  
To harm my life's perennial stuff ;  
For I have built my throne sublime  
Upon the wreck of conquer'd Time.

## THE DIRGE OF LARRA.

[Boston Miscellany, January, 1842.]

IMITATED FROM THE SPANISH OF ZORRILLA.

It was a dark evening in the month of February. A funeral car passed slowly through the streets of Madrid, followed by a long procession, composed chiefly of the most intelligent and highly educated young men of the capital of Spain. On the car was a coffin containing the remains of Larra. His friends had placed upon the cover a garland composed of laurel interwoven with cypress. It was one of the few occasions, which have occurred in Spain within our time, when a public homage has been offered to merely literary and poetical talent, unaided by the outward advantages of rank and fortune.

Don José Mariano de Larra had been, for several years preceding, the most distinguished of the living poets of Spain. His career was arrested by an unfortunate attachment. The lady of his love, after lending for some time a favorable ear to his vows, with a fickleness not unnatural to the sex, changed her purpose, and insisted on breaking off the connexion. After using every effort to dissuade her from this determination, Larra, at the end of a long conversation on the subject, swore, in the passionate excitement of the moment, that he would not survive the separation, and that the hour in which she should finally announce it to him, should be the last of his existence. 'You have then but a short time left for repentance,' replied the lady, perhaps considering the desperate words of Larra as mere bravado, 'for I assure you, whatever the results may be, that, with my consent, we shall never meet again.' Larra retired from her presence, and within a few minutes she heard the report of the pistol-shot that terminated his life.

The procession took its melancholy way through the streets of Madrid to the cemetery near the Fuencarral Gate, where a niche had been prepared by a friendly hand for the remains of the dead. A numerous concourse filled the place, and the fast retiring twilight threw a gray and gloomy color upon the bones that paved the floor, the inscriptions that covered the walls, and the faces of the assistants. After the funeral ceremonies were over, a friend of the deceased, Señor Roca de Togores, pronounced a eulogy, in which he sketched with the eloquence of kindred

genius, the brilliant, though stormy and disastrous career of the unfortunate bard.

"The impression produced by it," says an eye-witness, "was of the deepest kind. The attachment we had felt for the deceased poet, — our sorrow at his melancholy death, — the images of decay and mortality with which we were surrounded, — the sepulchre opening at our feet, — the starry sky above our heads, — the touching expressions of sympathy and tenderness which had fallen from the lips of the eloquent speaker, — all combined to excite our sensibility to the highest degree. Tears flowed from every eye; and we looked round upon each other in silence, as if we were longing to hear some new voice give utterance, under a still higher inspiration, to our common feelings.

"At this moment there stepped forth from among us, and, as it were, from within the sepulchre before our feet, a young man unknown to us all, and of almost boyish appearance. After glancing at the grave and then at the sky, he turned his pale face to the company and began to read with a trembling voice, which none of us had ever heard before, an elegy in honor of the dead. Scarcely, however, had he commenced, when he was overcome by the excess of his emotion and compelled to stop. The reading of the elegy was finished by the orator, who had just concluded his address. Never, perhaps, was the full effect of fine poetry more distinctly seen or more promptly acknowledged. Our surprise was equal to our enthusiasm. No sooner had we learned the name of the gifted mortal who had framed these charming verses, than we saluted him with a sort of religious reverence, and gave thanks to the Providence which had thus so manifestly interfered to bring forth, as it were from the very grave of our lost bard, a fit successor to his genius and glory. The same procession which had attended the remains of the illustrious Larra to the resting-place of the dead, now sallied forth in triumph to announce to the living the advent of a new poet, and proclaimed with enthusiasm the name of Zorrilla."

The high expectations excited by this interesting scene seem to have been fully realized. Zorrilla has been ever since regarded as the most distinguished of the Spanish living poets. His Elegy on Larra stands at the opening of the collection of his poems, now composing six volumes. The following free imitation will give some imperfect notion of the original, the effect of which, on the first recitation, was probably somewhat heightened by the strange and affecting circumstances under which it was delivered.

On the breeze I hear the knell  
Of the solemn, funeral bell,  
Marshalling another guest  
To the grave's unbroken rest.

He has done his earthly toil,  
And cast off his mortal coil,  
As a maid, in beauty's bloom,  
Seeks the cloister's living tomb.

When he saw the Future rise  
To his disenchanted eyes,  
Void of Love's celestial light,  
It was worthless in his sight;  
And he hurried, without warning,  
To the night that knows no morning.

He has perish'd in his pride.  
Like a fountain, summer-dried;  
Like a flower of odorous breath,  
Which the tempest scattereth;  
But the rich aroma left us,  
Shows the sweets that have been reft us,  
And the meadow, fresh and green,  
What the fountain would have been.

Ah! the Poet's mystic measure  
Is a rich but fatal treasure;  
Bliss to others, to the master  
Full of bitterest disaster.

Poet! sleep within the tomb,  
Where no other voice shall come  
O'er the silence to prevail,  
Save a brother-poet's wail;  
That, — if parted spirits know  
Aught that passes here below, —  
Falling on thy pensive ear,  
Softly as an infant's tear,  
Shall relate a sweeter story  
Than the pealing trump of glory.

If beyond our mortal sight,  
In some glorious realm of light,  
Poets pass their happy hours,  
Far from this cold world of ours,  
Oh, how sweet to cast away  
This frail tenement of clay,  
And in spirit soar above  
To the home of endless Love.

And if in that world of bliss,  
Thou rememberest aught of this,  
If *not-Being's* higher scene  
Have a glimpse of what *has been*,  
Poet ! from the seats divine,  
Let thy spirit answer mine.

## THE YOUNG AMERICAN.

[Democratic Review, May, 1843.]

Scion of a mighty stock !  
 Hands of iron, — hearts of oak, —  
 Follow with unflinching tread  
 Where the noble fathers led !

Craft and subtle treachery,  
 Gallant youth ! are not for thee :  
 Follow thou in word and deeds  
 Where the God within thee leads !

Honesty with steady eye,  
 Truth and pure simplicity,  
 Love that gently winneth hearts, —  
 These shall be thy only arts.

Prudent in the council train,  
 Dauntless on the battle plain,  
 Ready at the country's need  
 For her glorious cause to bleed.

Where the dews of night distil  
 Upon Vernon's holy hill ;  
 Where above it gleaming far  
 Freedom lights her guiding star :



Thither turn the steady eye,  
Flashing with a purpose high !  
Thither with devotion meet,  
Often turn the pilgrim feet !

Let thy noble motto be  
GOD, — the COUNTRY, — LIBERTY !  
Planted on Religion's rock,  
Thou shalt stand in every shock.

Laugh at danger far or near !  
Spurn at baseness, — spurn at fear !  
Still with persevering might,  
Speak the truth, and do the right !

So shall Peace, a charming guest,  
Dove-like in thy bosom rest,  
So shall Honor's steady blaze  
Beam upon thy closing days.

Happy if celestial favor  
Smile upon the high endeavor :  
Happy if it be thy call  
In the holy cause to fall.

## THE FUNERAL OF GOETHE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF HARRO HARRING.

[Democratic Review, November, 1842.]

THE Poem of which a translation is here presented, exhibits one of the various lights under which the character of Goethe has been viewed by his countrymen and the literary world. It is curious to contrast the extreme bitterness of the censure here expressed, with the tone of admiration, — I may almost say, *adoration*, — with which he has been held up by Carlyle, not merely as the first poet of his day, but as the great moral and religious regenerator of modern times. There is a downright, straightforward, business-like air in these stanzas, which gives a favorable impression in regard to the author's sincerity, though the excessive acrimony of the satire may throw some doubts upon his discretion. It is not to be denied, however, that the friends of improvement and liberty in Germany have no small ground for complaint in the total indifference shown by their favorite poet to the fortunes of his country at the most trying moment of her history.

### I.

SLEEP well beneath thy lordly funeral stole,  
 While envying lords are crowding round thy hearse,  
 Bard of the lofty rhyme and little soul!  
 Thou star-bedizen'd, courtly King of verse!  
 Sublime and sweet, I own, was every line  
 That ever flow'd from thy prolific pen;  
 But never did one German thought of thine,  
 In the long course of thy most varied strain,  
 E'er reach the German hearts of thy true countrymen.

### II.

In all thy works, — the more than fifty tomes, —  
 I seek in vain to find a single place,

Wherein a word of kindly counsel comes  
 In earnest love to thy own German race.  
 The people hung upon thy lips: — they took  
 With eager, open mouth whatever came;  
 But thou, poor, selfish soul! could'st never look  
 Beyond thyself. It was a sin and shame  
 That thy own Fatherland for thee was but a name.

## III.

God gave the gifted bard his breathing thought  
 And burning word, — for what? — that he might raise  
 The people to his level, — upward brought,  
 Electrified, by his inspiring lays.  
 His lofty aim should soar beyond, above  
 The present time, to higher, holier things;  
 His verse a sword of truth, a charm of love,  
 To cut the root of Falsehood's fatal stings,  
 To thrill with ravishing tones the multitude's  
 heart-strings.

## IV.

But thou! — what hast thou done with all the powers  
 Which lavish Nature wasted on thy soul?  
 What object hadst thou in thy happiest hours  
 Of inspiration, but the paltry goal,  
 Thyself? — What hast thou brought to pass for truth,  
 For man's improvement, country, liberty?  
 Did thy cold bosom, from thy earliest youth,  
 Throughout thy long career of eighty-three  
 Long years, bestow one throb on suffering Germany?

## V.

Thou boastedst thou couldst understand the ways  
 Of God himself; — say, didst thou understand  
 What God had wrought beneath thy proper gaze  
 Miraculously in that neighboring land?

When Falsehood thron'd was put to open shame,  
Didst thou approve or hold thy peace? Ah no!  
Thou spak'dst of that most holy cause with blame;  
Thou call'dst it, "insurrection of the low,"  
And "lawful government's unlawful overthrow."

## VI.

What was it? Was it not the grand affair,  
At which three centuries our Germany  
Had wrought with heart and hand? The holy war  
Of Truth with Lies,—of Man with Mockery?  
Didst thou as such regard it,—thou, whose eye  
For everything beside was passing bright?  
Ah me! amidst his courtly mummery  
What cares a rhyming, courtly Parasite,  
Though millions all around are bleeding for the right?

## VII.

A word from thee, and Germany had caught  
Some glimpses of what Germany should be.  
A word from thee had fir'd the people's thought  
To ecstasy,—to madness.—Germany,  
Storm-shatter'd, blasted by oppression's blow,  
Poor Germany perhaps had now been free.  
That saving word thou didst not speak:—but know  
To whom much has been trusted, much shall be  
From him requir'd again:—'tis God's declar'd decree.

## VIII.

And much to thee was trusted: Nature's care  
Most bounteously her rarest gifts allow'd,  
Dispensing to thee for thy single share  
What ten well-gifted minds had well endow'd.  
But thou these matchless powers didst basely hide,  
And thy young heart's uncoupted treasure sell

For worthless toys, — intent on worldly pride  
 And sensual pleasure only, — to the weal  
 Of country, human kind, through life insensible.

## IX.

Thy busy thought explor'd all sciences  
 And arts ; — thy busy pen explain'd the whole,  
 Save one : — one only that most searching gaze  
 Passed unobserv'd, — the science of the soul  
 Thou, to whom nothing else remain'd unknowp,  
 Wert still a stranger to the better part  
 Of thy own nature ; — never breath'dst a tone,  
 With all thy mastery in thy minstrel art,  
 That told of Love to Man, deep-rooted in thy heart.

## X.

German in this alone, if nought beside,  
 It was thy ruling passion to possess  
 The gift, — at once our nation's curse and pride, —  
 The boasted, fatal *Manysidedness*.  
 The German roams with satchel in his hand,  
 And brings in pomp laborious nothings home  
 From every field of learning, while the land  
 He calls his own is crush'd beneath the doom  
 Of thirty tyrannies, — the scorn of Christendom.

## XI.

Germans like thee know all things thoroughly,  
 Excepting this, that they are German-born :  
 Heroes with pen in hand, they calmly see  
 Their native Germany to fragments torn,  
 And never stir a finger : — poorly vain  
 Of useless lore, they want the generous glow  
 Of the true spirit, and with fond disdain  
 View from their fancied heights, as quite below  
 Their notice, the great scene of human weal and woe.

## XII.

So great and yet so little ! — Born a king,  
 In Mind's unbounded empire, thou must be  
 A minister at Weimar ! — born to fling  
 The fetters of thy mighty minstrelsy  
 O'er charmed Europe, thou must condescend  
 To play the menial ; — never satisfied  
 That thou wert noble, till thy august friend,  
 His Most Transparent Highness,\* certified  
 The fact and round thy neck two yards of ribbon tied.

## XIII.

Then rest in peace beneath thy princely pall !  
 And Germany shall weep beside the bier ; —  
 Weep for what thou hast been, and weep for all  
 Thou might'st have been, with many a scalding tear.  
 Thou wert the Cræsus of the realm of mind,  
 Who wouldst not to thy suffering land allow  
 A mite : — for this the Germans leave behind  
 Their kindly homes, and as they wandering go  
 To climes afar, on thee the bitter curse bestow.

## XIV.

For this I hold thee up to public scorn  
 Before the world in all thy littleness, —  
 Greater than thee, however lowly born,  
 In that I feel, in joy and in distress,  
 My brotherhood with man. With cheerful heart  
 I own thy genius, — own the potent charm  
 So oft thrown o'er me by thy minstrel art,\*  
 But neither Rank nor Glory shall disarm  
 The steadfast voice of Truth, whome'er it may alarm.

\* The barbarous term, *Durchlaucht*, which is used in Germany as the official style of the reigning princes of the Ducal order, and which is commonly translated *Most Serene Highness*, means literally *Transparency*. I have accordingly rendered it *Most Transparent Highness*.

## XV.

Therefore it is, all-gifted as thou wert  
With God's best gifts of genius and of grace,  
That I pronounce thee recreant at heart,  
False to thyself, thy country and thy race.  
Alike to me the lordly and the low,  
I view them by the same impartial light.  
But one unflinching rule for all I know, —  
Content that others should to me requite  
What I mete out to them, — the honest Rule of Right.

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